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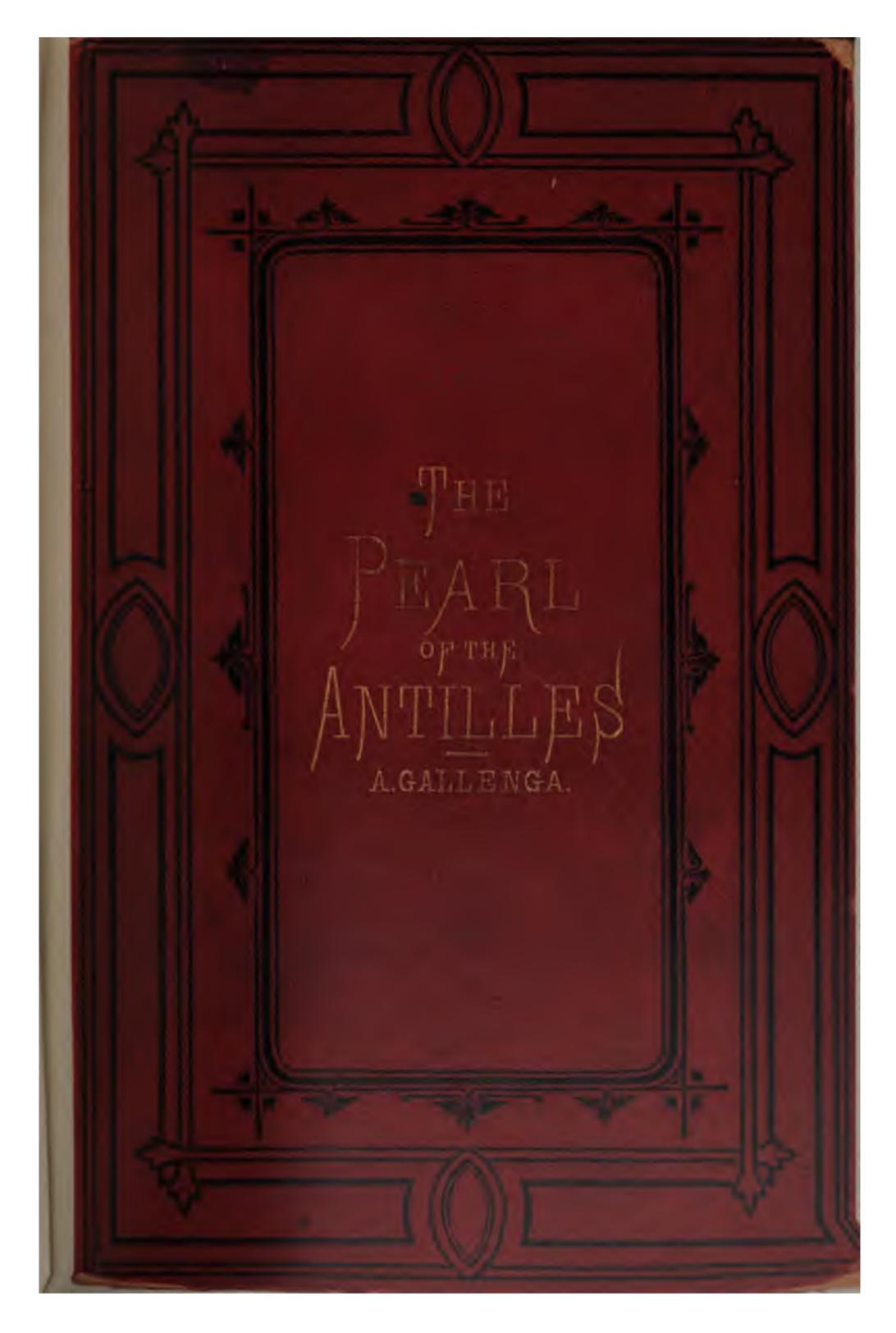




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THE  
PEARL  
OF THE  
ANTILLES  
A. GALLENGA.



THE  
PEARL OF THE ANTILLES.

BY *Antonio* A. GALLENGA,

AUTHOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE IN FIEDMONT," ETC.

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY  
SIR JOHN PETER GRANT, K.C.B.,  
GOVERNOR OF JAMAICA,  
THIS VOLUME  
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.



# THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE VOYAGE OUT.

Object of the Journey—Cuban News—Cuba and America—Cuba and England—From Southampton to St. Thomas—Bad Weather—Better Weather—My Fellow Passengers—State of Cuba—Spain and Cuba—Patriots in Cuba—The Spanish Party—The Cuban Party—The Spanish Club—The Volunteers—The Government—The Insurgents—From St. Thomas to Havannah.

“WHAT are we to think of the Cuban insurrection?” Such was the problem of which I was bidden to seek the solution. Any second-hand information that could be obtained on the subject was of little avail, and it was deemed expedient that some one should go out, and by what Sir A. Alison calls “personal observation” find out the truth about Cuba. For more than four years we were told there had been a civil war in that Island, waged by a faction amongst the natives, aided by foreign sympathisers, with the object of wresting it from the Spanish Government

to which it belongs, and either erecting it into an independent state or annexing it to the North American Union. The intelligence received day by day of this long-protracted struggle was so imperfect and contradictory as to leave us, on the arrival of every Transatlantic mail, less wise than we were before. From American journals, and especially from the bouncing New York Herald, whose "commissioners" swarmed about the island, we had flaming reports of frequent and signal victories of the insurgents, of their heroic efforts and sacrifices, of their boundless resources, of their untamed resolution. The news from Spain was still, as it had been from the beginning, that the insurrection was at an end—"almost" at an end. There hardly was, indeed, the Spaniards said, there hardly ever had been an insurrection in Cuba. There were only a few bandits and foreign filibusters lurking in the woods and swamps of the uninhabited districts of the Island, unable to gain a firm hold of any town or even village, to establish a settled government or centre of action; never awaiting an encounter with the numerous forces in pursuit of them, but merely harassing them by a desultory warfare of ambush and brigandage. That so inconsiderable, however chronic, a disturbance could end by the severance of the Colony from the Mother Country was a contingency which no Spaniard could be brought to admit. "Cuba

must not be lost" is the cry in which patriots of all parties are always ready emphatically and unanimously to join. Prim alone, in the fulness of his power in 1869, seemed for a moment to listen to proposals made to him for a cession of the Island; but, either because he was not fully satisfied as to the powers of the agents who applied to him, or as to the earnestness of purpose of those in whose name they professed to treat, or because he felt no confidence in his own ability to bring the nation over to his views, or, possibly, owing to some other reason that remains to be discovered—the negotiation was attended with no results, and was soon abandoned.

What Prim himself had probably little chance of accomplishing, could scarcely be undertaken by the statesmen who succeeded him, least of all by those who acted in the name of King Amadeus I. A foreign sovereign whose accession to the throne had called forth so lively and inveterate an hostility, was the last man who could venture upon any attempt to disintegrate the monarchy; and whatever may have been the real mind of the king himself, or of his responsible advisers, their language must needs be an echo of the popular clamour, that "Even if Spain should perish, Cuba must not be lost."

On the other hand, no one had forgotten what a late President of the United States thought and loudly proclaimed in his message. The force of circum-

stances (a "manifest destiny," said Mr. Buchanan in 1860) required that the United States should obtain possession of Cuba. He did not wish to take it by open violence; he did not approve of filibustering outrages. He intended to purchase the Island, and and was ready to offer a fair price for it; but if his offer was not accepted, he did not see how a collision between the two countries could be avoided. Years elapsed, and another President held a different language. General Grant does not recommend Sam Slick's policy, that "an American citizen who covets his neighbour's watch should scorn to steal it, as he needs only trade for it." General Grant is perfectly willing that Spain should keep what is her own. He expresses no wish to obtain Cuba by fair means or foul. He is only grieved at the continuance of the disturbed condition of the island. He is concerned at a contest which has already lasted so long, which is carried on at his very door, and which humanity cannot witness unmoved. He objects to the perpetuation of slavery; a terrible wrong which is the source of terrible evil; and he is bound to guard the interests of American citizens whom choice or chance may have implicated in the contest. His Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, it appears, has again and again been instructed to convey to the Spanish Government his views on the subject.

In our own country this Cuban question has created

an interest altogether out of proportion with the information it has ever been possible to obtain about it; but, on the whole, a vast majority of our people have, perhaps rather hastily, been disposed to endorse the conclusion at which some of our travellers have arrived, that "an American annexation of Cuba is an event as desirable as it is unavoidable;" and that "our best wishes should be for its speedy consummation." It was important to ascertain whether such a solution of the question was as imminent and as inevitable as it had been described; whether the Americans, in their present mood, are at all bent on obtaining possession of Cuba; whether they are in a hurry about it; and whether they have either sufficient strength or wealth at their disposal to force or to bribe the Spaniards to consent to the transfer.

Such were the main points on which it was desirable that light should be thrown; and, in order to satisfy my mind I secured a berth on board the "Elbe," Captain Moir, a Royal Mail steamer which was to leave Southampton for the West Indies on Thursday, the 2nd of January. I have not often been fortunate in my trips across the Atlantic, and I have a vivid recollection of the miseries I endured on board the "Britannia" of the Cunard line, during an eighteen days' passage from Liverpool to Halifax; a voyage which also began on a 2nd of January, and which became

epic, as it found a *Sacer Vates* in our fellow-traveller, Charles Dickens, who made it the theme of the first chapter of his "American Notes." Neither have I forgotten the agony of another and a longer navigation from Gibraltar to New York, in the year of grace 1836, on board the American schooner "Independence," a navigation of fifty-two days, the hardships and sufferings of which I alone of all the passengers survived—the others, a dog, a monkey, a donkey, and twelve fowls, all sinking one after another and leaving me *tête-à-tête* with the Captain, who could not be persuaded that I understood never a word of his Yankee English, but held me by my coat-button, and entertained me with long yarns about the charms of his "Bosting guls," and his own popularity among them.

This West Indian trip however on which I was now bent, would, I had been assured, take place under the most favourable auspices. There had been terrific south-western gales for nearly four months; the wind must by this time have spent its fury, and could not fail to veer round to the opposite quarter. We were well over Christmas when bright frosty weather invariably sets in, and a gentle north breeze would soon waft us into mild climates through which we would glide over smooth seas all the way to our destination. But alas! we were very far from realizing these pleasing anticipations. The south-west had not

said its last word. At Southampton, the night before we embarked, the very roof of the huge and massive South-western Hotel seemed on the point of being blown off from over our heads; on board the tug which conveyed us from the pier to the steamer, we had to huddle together to withstand as best we could the lashing gusts and pelting showers which scourged us; and when a land lubber like myself pointed to a rainbow which broke through the gloom of the murky sky, and hailed it as the harbinger of better weather, he was instantly borne down by the croaking remark that it was only at night that the rainbow is "the sailor's delight," in the morning it is "the sailor's warning."

But whatever the omen might portend, we had embarked and were "in for it." We had to struggle against a perfect hurricane in darkness and rain for ten days before we made the Azores. We toiled along for several days longer through heavy seas, and it was only on the 19th, *i.e.* four or five days beyond all the limits of a fair average passage, that we anchored at St. Thomas, our first station in the West Indies, where the people had already given us up as lost and, we were told, had even on that very Sunday offered up prayers in their churches for the safety of our bodies and, failing that, for the welfare of our imperishable souls. Our very master, Captain Moir, was put out by the stubborn continuance of bad weather.

He was heard to mutter that "there was no luck in this voyage;" and even in a fit of grim pleasantry he requested me to write to the "Times," and appeal to that universal redresser of wrongs against the ill-treatment we had to endure at the hands of the adverse elements.

And yet we cannot look back upon that "long imprisonment with a chance of drowning" as a period of unmitigated suffering. Even in the depth of the "most awful storms by which the ocean was ever vexed," the view of the "mountain-high" sea which hemmed us in right and left was unspeakably grand; sea and sky blended together in a dark mass, with no other object to relieve the gloom than the seagulls which hovered about us for more than two-thirds of our way across the Atlantic, careering joyously around us, poised on their white wings tipped with black, breasting without visible effort the gale before which our strongest sails flew to tatters, and against which our powerful engine seemed hardly to make any headway. Presently, when at last we fell in with the trade winds, and air and water began to deal with us more beneficently, mere life became enjoyment. The mild temperature and the blazing sky kept us on deck till the small hours in the morning; and, in good humour with ourselves and with the world around us, we soon found it as easy to enjoy as to dispense with each other's company. Our fellow-passengers improved on acquaint-

ance, as the weather mended. We became sociable, sympathetic, and, before we parted, strong ties of friendship and perhaps even of warmer affection, sprang up between persons who had never met before and who were by no means sure of ever coming together again.

It was among the most genial of these travelling companions that I looked for some inkling of the conditions of the tropical regions I was about to visit. We had, as usual, every race and condition of men, every imaginable costume and language on board. There was a Diplomatist, a Colonial Governor, a Vice-consul, a Baptist Preacher, a lovely woman—a paragon of loveliness,—a perfect kitten of a darling little girl three years old, and there were besides many merchants and traders, engineers and planters, professional men and other nondescript English, American, German, Italian, Spanish, or Spanish American subjects and citizens, from most of whom any man who would take the trouble could learn something. The errand on which I was travelling had, I hardly know how, become pretty generally known ; and I was accosted with some curiosity by men puzzled by my look and speech, some of whom set me down for a German, others for a Frenchman or Canadian, while the majority inclined to designate me an “old Scotchman.” Presently, mere curiosity warming into earnest interest, they very good-naturedly volunteered to aid me in the fulfilment

of my task. They had all something to tell me about Cuba and the slave trade, and coolie immigration, and brown sugar and muscovado. They thrust pamphlets and newspaper articles, and even quarto volumes, into my hand; and as all parties, all opinions, all interests had their representatives in that multitude, they assailed me with a variety of arguments by which any man's brain, however much stronger than mine, must needs have been distraught and bewildered.

By dint of patience, however, by listening to everyone and keeping my own counsel, I fancied I had learnt something about my subject even some time before I landed at St. Thomas, and yet more on my further progress to Havannah; and the following is what I made out of the notes which I took at the close of the long conversations with which my fellow-passengers daily entertained me from morning to evening.

Disaffection, conspiracy, and even partial revolt in Cuba are not evils of recent date. Spain has been at times an improvident and rapacious ruler; and although her own subjects in the Peninsula are so accustomed to be misgoverned that they hardly seem to perceive it, it has been otherwise with her vast Transatlantic possessions, where the example of the United States and the convulsions of the French Revolution led to the loss of nearly all her Colonies after a very

short and by no means glorious struggle. Reduced to her possessions in the West Indian Islands, consisting chiefly of Cuba and Porto Rico, Spain clung to them with heroic obstinacy, attaching an especial importance to Cuba, the position of which as the key to the Gulf of Mexico and the centre of all its trade, made Havannah the emporium of Central America. Hence was Cuba greatly petted and flattered; called by the endearing appellations of the "Pearl of the Antilles" and the "Ever faithful Island of Cuba;" made to profit by the revolt of the other Colonies and by the catastrophe of the Negro Insurrection of San Domingo, which brought her swarms of fugitives wealthy and full of loyalty to Spain—a loyalty grounded on their attachment to the institution of slavery. The gain to Cuba was so great that her population, which in 1772 only numbered 272,270 counting whites and blacks, rose in one century to 1,414,508.

The Island is about 700 miles in length, and has a surface of 80,000 square miles, or something like one-fourth of Peninsular Spain or one half of Continental Italy; and, although only one-tenth of its territory is under cultivation, it yields in good years a crop of sugar the exportation of which has lately amounted to £15,000,000., and even £20,000,000., without computing the enormous production of tobacco, coffee, cotton, rice, etc. That the Americans as a nation

should have coveted such a possession could be easily understood ; that possession moreover was matter of vital importance to the Southern or Slave-holding States ; because, after the abolition of slavery in the English West Indies, in spite of Spain's solemn engagement to prohibit and prevent slave-trade, and the £400,000 *douceur* she received for it, Cuba had become the chief slave market upon which the Union was dependent for its supply. Hence the possession of Cuba was the main object of the slave-holding South ; and hence, after many ineffectual attempts to obtain the Island by purchase, recourse was had to incessant disturbance, fomented by filibustering expeditions both from the United States and from the Spanish-American Republics, which, however, always ended in the easy victory of the Spanish Government, and in the wholesale shooting or garotting of its vanquished opponents.

At the close of the Civil War in the United States the Spanish Antilles enjoyed the full monopoly of slave labour, and they thus obtained advantages, especially in the production of sugar, which easily overcame all their 'neighbours' competition. This led to the formation of a strong Spanish party in the islands, and especially in Cuba, for whom the cause of slavery and that of Spanish domination were identical and synonymous, and these are known as *Peninsulares* or Spanish Immigrants, and are branded by their

adversaries as *Negreros*, or blackguards and slave-dealers.

On the other hand there is a party in the Island, consisting of Creoles, or native Cubans, children and descendants of Spanish Immigrants, who have never recovered from their hankering after Colonial Independence; whose cry is still "Cuba for the Cubans," and who, either by their own efforts or by the aid of sympathisers from the United States and the Spanish main-land, are bent on wresting the Antilles from the Mother Country. These constitute the National Party, and they are stigmatised by their adversaries as *Insurrectos*, or Insurgents, whether they are actually in arms against Spain, or conspiring, or simply suspected of conspiring against her. They are known under the names of Rebels and Filibusters. Not unfrequently in the same family the father, a born Spaniard, is a strong loyalist and a *Negrero*, and the sons, natives of Cuba, are ardent insurrectionists and filibusters. Spain professes to cling to her West Indian possessions merely from a point of honour, and denies that she derives any material advantages from them. She declares that Cuba has from the beginning cost the Mother Country more than it ever yielded; but the fact is that, could the present order of things be maintained, the Island would soon be a far wealthier country than the Peninsula itself. The indirect advantages accruing, both to Spain and to the Spaniards, from Cuba

are enormous. In all her Transatlantic contests in Mexico, in San Domingo, and the Southern Republics, Cuba was always made to bear all the burdens of the war expenditure. It is Cuba which enables Spain to rid herself of harpy officials, batches of whom succeed one another at every half-yearly Ministerial crisis and who, as they have only six months wherein to make their fortunes, contrive to scrape money together by every possible means of flagrant rapacity and corruption. By a protective tariff almost utterly excluding foreign agricultural and industrial products, and by differential duties on foreign shipping, Spain contrives to keep up at the expense of her Colonies whatever manufacturing and trading enterprise still flourishes in the Peninsula. Her efforts to maintain her footing in Cuba have, therefore, been most strenuous and unremitting; and they chiefly consisted in organising a strong despotic and arbitrary Government, and a militia force of volunteer battalions in the towns, enlisted among her well-known partisans—the *Peninsulares* and *Negreros*.

Such was the state of affairs in the Island up to the downfall of the Government of Queen Isabella in 1868. But the tidings of that "glorious September Revolution" seemed to create a new spirit among its population, and there was a momentary and perhaps not very earnest reconciliation between the Loyalists and the Revolutionists, both of which parties were

known to have sympathised with the authors of the September movement, and even to have supplied a large part of the funds by the aid of which it was compassed. The good understanding springing from this circumstance gave rise to some hope that peace and order could be ensured by the introduction of reforms which should amount to the establishment of "autonomy," or Home Rule, in the Colony. Any step towards such an object was however strongly discountenanced, not only by Lersundi, the last Captain-General of Queen Isabella, who, warmly attached to the interests of the fallen Government, threatened the Island with a negro insurrection and declared that Cuba should for ever be either wholly Spanish or wholly African, but also by the Governor sent by Prim to supersede Lersundi, General Dulce, who gave the Cubans to understand that they should have "all the liberties of Spain," but no other "liberty," *i.e.*, no local self-government.

There is something exaggerated and superlative in all Spanish ideas. Spaniards invariably pass from one extreme to another, and the Constitution which they elaborated in 1868-9 was not only to be "the most liberal in the world," but also the best suited to the wants and interests of the whole world. Sancho Panza had set his heart on the government of an island, and Barataria was to him an island, though to all the rest of the world a village on the main-land. Upon analo-

gous, though contrary views, the Spanish legislators of 1868-9, conceived that to make the Antilles and the Philippines an integral part of the Spanish territory, it was sufficient to decree it; and they accordingly decreed that all their transmarine possessions should be not islands, not colonies, but provinces as essentially Spanish as if they were a mere continuation of Galicia or Catalonia, Valencia or Andalusia. The Cubans must, as children say, "pretend" to be Spaniards, in return for which fiction on their part they should have the honour of being represented in the Madrid Cortes; they should enjoy the blessings of unlimited freedom of the press, of meeting and association, of universal suffrage, etc.—in one word, the enjoyment of "all liberties for all men"—precisely as such liberties are understood, practised, and guaranteed in Spain. The most obvious consequence of all this should, of course, have been the immediate abolition of all rights of men over men, the elevation of negroes, slaves or freed, to the condition of men and brethren and of free and independent voters. There were men in the Madrid Cortes, and men among the patriots of Cuba, who would gladly have gone the full length of these sweeping measures; but the bare mention of such "reforms" alarmed and distracted the Peninsulars, and set them not only against their old adversaries of the Insular party, but also against the Government, which they at first suspected of a disposition to befriend that

party. From that moment the Spanish Government ceased to have any real power in Cuba. The volunteer battalions, who had received a new organisation under General Lersundi, soon ceased to be under control; they became the only masters, if not of the country, at least of all the chief cities and especially of Havannah. They re-organised and armed themselves at their own pleasure. They garrisoned the forts which command the cities, banished the regular troops from their walls, and had the Captain-General and all the authorities, military, naval, and civil, under their thumb. They compelled General Dulce to embark on a man-of-war and quit the island; they made the country too hot for Caballero de Rodas, and they gave their successors, Valmaseda and Ceballos, to understand that Spanish laws, statutes, or decrees were not to be enforced, not even promulgated, without their express sanction and good pleasure. Such was, for instance, the case with the Moret law for a gradual abolition of slavery; which not only remained a dead letter, but was not even allowed to be printed or published in the Colonies for nearly two years after the whole world supposed it had been in action.

Enlistment in the volunteer battalions was, nominally open to all white citizens. Practically however as in the cities, and especially in Havannah, the Peninsular element predominates, if not by numbers at least by daring and resolution as well as by wealth

and influence ; the result is that the main strength of the volunteers consists of Conservatives, Loyalists, and *Negreros*, and their object is not to go out and fight the insurgents in the disaffected districts—for that is the task they leave to the regular troops—but to overawe the sympathisers and supporters of the Rebel party, to ferret out their accomplices, and to do duty as a police, terrorising the cities. These battalions, and the Council of their Colonels, together with the *Casino Español*, or Spanish Club—a Havannah institution which has been copied in all the other cities—constitute a State within the State almost on the same footing as that on which the Paris Commune organised itself during and after the siege. The leading men among the volunteers care very little for Spain, but very much for their slave-holding interests. They are determined that even if abolition be unavoidable it shall only be effected on their own conditions, that it shall be effected in their own good time and by themselves alone ; and the means by which they have hitherto carried their object—the expulsion of Captains-General, the massacres at the Villanueva Theatre and at the Louvre *Café Restaurant*, and, above all things, the execution of eight students in cold blood and under the form of a mock trial—prove that they have the power as well as the determination to hold their ground both against the Spanish Government and against their own Liberal countrymen.

This, however, although strictly correct, is only the extreme view of the case. It is perfectly true that the Captain-General and his subordinates are wholly destitute of actual power; but the *prestige* of an authority which was till lately unlimited, the necessity for at least something like administrative routine, and the very hypocrisy with which the Peninsulars profess the utmost loyalty to Spain even while they virtually set her rule at defiance, may still enable a prudent and firm governor to maintain the semblance of order and put off the evil day of general riot and dissolution—that “cataclysm” which everybody in Cuba so gloomily anticipates. The excesses to which the volunteers in frequent instances abandoned themselves were the acts of the mere rabble that disgraced their ranks, and these were, I know not how sincerely, disavowed and discountenanced by their leaders and by their more honourable companions in arms. Something like reform and selection has silently and gradually been going on for some time in the volunteer body, which is now comparatively quiescent. But the mere existence and ascendancy of such a militia must be looked upon as a perpetual danger, especially as it is known that the Captains-General have often contemplated some *coup de main* by which to overpower and disarm the volunteers, and have secretly brought together land and sea forces fully adequate to the purpose, but have always had to desist from the

attack, dreading mutiny and defection among their own soldiers and sailors, who are only too ready to fraternise with the men they were intended to combat.

The volunteers, a well-armed and equipped, martial-looking set of men, are said to amount to about 60,000 in the whole island, and 11,000 in the city of Havannah alone. The troops who have been sent in various detachments to the Antilles since 1868 may be reckoned at no less than 80,000, by far the greatest number of whom have been consumed and devoured by various diseases inherent to the climate and by the hardships to which they are exposed in their hunt after the insurgents. In this hunt the volunteers take very little part; their service is limited to the police of the towns, the occasional garrisoning of strong places, and ravaging inroads into the disaffected districts. No regular soldiers are to be seen in the cities, not even as sentries at the doors of the Captain-Genéral's palace at Havannah.

Such is in Cuba the position of the Spanish Government, and such its relations to that terrible Conservative, Peninsular, or *Negrero* party which affects to be its friend and supporter, but which may at any moment become its enemy, and which is, meantime, its master. With respect to the Insurrection, it is simply contemptible in so far as it is open, but most formidable in its latent sympathies and associations.

Its most sanguine partisans declare that there are now about 15,000 insurgents in arms, scattered here and there about the Central and Eastern districts of the Island. The official estimates reduce their numbers to 7000 or 8000, sometimes even to 3000. The papers publish almost daily reports of petty skirmishes of no very serious character, and leading to no perceptible results. The Insurgents have no fixed residence, no known centre, no stronghold except their almost impenetrable forests. There seems to be no certainty as to the whereabouts of their leader, Cespedes, although some enterprising American newspapers commissioners assert that they have visited and "interviewed" him. But there is another and a far more extensive and formidable insurrection hidden in the hearts of a vast number of the Creoles or native Cubans, men who are hushed and crushed by sheer terror, but who would be willing enough to join in a general rising against the Spanish Government and its supporters, could they only see an opportunity of striking a blow with full certainty of success, and without the least danger to themselves. Of these latent Insurgents, who, like the old Jacobin of the first French Revolution, have "*le tocsin dans le cœur*," there are perhaps as many as 150,000 scattered in Havannah and the other cities. But apart from these direct sympathisers, the insurrection has the active though indirect support of

some of the very men who are loudest in denouncing and execrating it; and these are merchants and shopkeepers in Havannah who, whatever may be their feelings and principles, are only guided by their interests, and who, while they are enriching themselves openly as contractors for the Spanish army, do not scruple secretly to turn a penny as purveyors of arms, ammunitions, and other stores to its opponents. So long as the insurrection is a wind that blows these worthy people good, it is idle to think that the movement will ever be brought to an end. The cause of order is not only imperilled, but also constantly injured, both by the open attitude of its adversaries and by the underhand treachery of its alleged supporters.

The remainder of our voyage from St. Thomas to Havannah was happily accomplished in five days. St. Thomas, a Danish possession and one of the small groups of the Virgin Islands is, as most readers are aware, the head station for the packets of our English Royal Mail Steam Navigation Company. The 'Elbe' left us at St. Thomas and proceeded on her further destination to Jacmel in Hayti, to Kingston in Jamaica, and to Colon on the Isthmus of Panama. But we found at St. Thomas other steamers intended for "international" service, plying between the various British, French, and Spanish Islands, in one of

which, the "Eider," Captain West, bound to Havannah and Vera Cruz, we took our passage. We steered straight for the island of Porto Rico, and landed for a few hours in St. Juan, its capital. We then followed our course to the westward along the Northern coasts of Porto Rico, of San Domingo or Hayti, and finally of Cuba; always as constantly favoured by the weather as we had hitherto been opposed, till, on the fifth day, Saturday, the 25th of January, at an early hour in the morning, we came in sight of the Morro and the other forts which guard the entrance of the Bay of Havannah, and were soon anchored in its tranquil waters.

## CHAPTER II.

### LIFE IN HAVANNAH.

First Impression—Old and New Town—The Environs—Smells  
—Noises—Men and Women—Spaniards and Cubans—Native  
and Foreign Traders—The Currency—The Loan.

It invariably happens to a traveler in the United States to be asked, almost before he lands, "How he likes America?" In Cuba the question is deemed unnecessary. A foreign visitor is assured by every native coming to greet him on his arrival, that he "cannot fail to be pleased with Havannah." The traveler's judgment is thus biassed before he can see for himself, and the impression actually made by the place must depend on his peculiar disposition to acquiesce in other people's views, or to rebel against them. Fortunately, in my own case, any pressure exercised on my mind by the partiality of the Cubans was in some degree counteracted by the harsh sentence of a

stranger, an intelligent and unprejudiced young Englishman doomed by his evil star to live for years in the place, and who prepared me to see in Havannah "the nastiest and most expensive hole in the world."

Should I like Havannah? To be sure: who would not be charmed by his first experience of life in the tropics? What is the brightness of sea and sky, even in Italy, compared with the glittering waves and blazing stars of this glowing region? What is the rank growth of elms and oaks even in moist England, compared with the teeming life of this torrid vegetation? Somehow, however, in spite of the raptures into which travelers new to the world, and especially those from dreary Yankeeland, are apt to fall, the country about Havannah, on a first glance, presents itself as singularly flat and bare, and the town itself, after a few hours' evidence, suggests the definition of a "city of smells and noises." The entrance of the bay, "the finest harbour in the world," is pleasing, not striking. There is nothing grand in the low scrubby hill on your left as you enter, where the famous forts of El Morro and Cabañas are bristling with cannon. The city on your right, lying on a level patch of land between the bay and the open sea, looks gay and sunny enough with its quaintly painted houses—green, red, blue, and yellow—and its multitude of church domes and steeples in every variety of questionable style and taste; the

whole towered over by the huge town-jail, a prominent and conspicuous object, with the *Lugar de los Patibulos*, the hanging and garotting ground, conveniently near it.

But you alight, and you tread narrow, crowded streets flanked on either side by fetid gutters, paved with the hardest and most uneven stones, with raised footpaths barely ten inches wide where, whether you walk or drive, you feel that you proceed at the risk of life or limb. There are 6000 hackney conveyances plying in these streets, as the natives hasten to inform you with great glee. The far-famed *volante*, that gig on very long shafts and very high wheels about which English humourists have made themselves merry, but which was, after all, one of the most practical "things of Cuba," is rapidly disappearing from the narrow thoroughfares, and its place is now usurped by the so-called "Victoria," a one-horse open fly, drawn by a sorry nag and driven by a rash, unskilful and obstinate driver, bumping and thumping madly along, running over the footway at every street corner, and only apparently becoming aware of other vehicles when he has locked a brother Jarvie's wheels or stove in his panels. It is no exaggeration to say that the wight who trusts himself to these conveyances may account himself fortunate if he does not come to grief more than thrice in two days; and an overturn or breakdown is here matter of such common occurrence that hardly

a man turns round to look either upon a dead horse or a smashed carriage, the driver being left alone to extricate himself from his predicament as he best can and, at all events, to relieve his feelings by a string of round oaths.

From the labyrinth of the old city you issue forth into the new town, making your way over any of the wide gaps everywhere cut through the ancient line of walls, and you come to a "city of magnificent distances," to broad unpaved roads and wide open places, to deep ruts and dismal holes and quagmires, where your driver dashes along at hap-hazard, never dreaming of picking his way but going through thick and thin as if he were riding a steeplechase, causing his "fare" to jump high on his seat, and splashing the greenish water of every puddle up to his very eyes. It was through this wilderness that I drove to the Telegraph Hotel, the best in the town, as I was told, placed on one side of the Field of Mars, close to the Railway Station, the Prado, the Tacon Theatre, the Tacon Promenade, the Bull Ring, and the Spanish Club, and in the centre of many rows of demolished bastions and half-built palaces; a maze of broad streets, rectilinear, at right angles, the abode of mud and dust—old mud and new dust—cumbered with big, loose stones—the streets all unfinished, many impassable. The town is in a state of transition. I dare say it will be all right to-morrow—*mañana*, the Spanish to-morrow.

In all this disorder, however, something like beauty may be descried. The shops, open in front, shaded by many-coloured awnings thrown athwart the street, look cool and not untidy. The houses, with doors and windows cut down to the ground, have a fresh, cheerful appearance in spite of the villainous iron bars doing duty for glass—the glazier's trade is utterly unknown throughout Cuba—as well as for blinds and shutters, and at certain hours of the afternoon and evening revealing the interior to the very holy of holies of domestic existence. Stately mansions with lofty porticoes and long colonnades are everywhere run up at random, *pêle-mêle*, by the side of squalid Negro huts where swarm stark-naked children of all hues pigging together in the gutter, with slovenly coloured women trailing their one muslin garment in the dust, and allowing it to slip with picturesque negligence from their dusky shoulders. What strikes the stranger at first sight is the profusion of smooth white marble—marble shops and counting-houses, marble halls, staircases, sitting and sleeping-room floors. The marble all comes from Genoa. Not, I am told, that there is any lack of excellent quarries in the Island, but because there is thrift in fetching the material from 6000 miles distance, for labour in Cuba is scarce, and whatever there is must make sugar. With a great deal of marble, and polished tiles, and no curtains or carpets, and four rocking-chairs and a table for furniture,

the wealthy classes manage to live in luxury. Their houses are mostly on the ground floor; barely one in twenty of the modern ones can boast of an upper story; the roofs of new dwellings are all flat, laid out in terraces, where the linen is drying by day and ladies and cats are lounging at eve. Havannah is essentially a male city. Women are scarce; and those who in the least respect themselves are seldom or never to be seen abroad, except in their carriages at the Prado, in their boxes at the Opera, or behind the iron gratings at their windows, clinging to the bars like captives in durance, while their lords higgles in their counting-houses, or loll in their *cafés* and clubs, smoking, smoking.

In three hours you may see the whole town; the killing of its lions takes less than three days. There is the Partagas Cigar Manufacture to be seen, and that of Cigarritos at the Honradez. There is something stately about the apartments of the Captain-General's palace, and, in the evening, about the interior of the Tacon Theatre. The cathedral is huge but not fine, old yet not ancient, dilapidated, and, as it were, worm eaten, and its ugliness is scarcely redeemed by the so-called "Mausoleum" of Columbus, under which the mortal remains of the great and good man at present rest after wandering from Valladolid to Seville, from Seville to San Domingo, and from San Domingo to Cuba. The style of the monument is quite in keeping with the

doggerel lines of the inscription, which I shall scarcely be charged with spoiling by my translation :—

“ O remains and image of great Colon,  
A thousand centuries abide guarded in the urn,  
And in the remembrance of our nation ! ” \*

Outside the town, where I have as yet only taken short drives to the Cerro suburb, to Marianao, the Richmond of Havannah, along the sea to the Chorrera Point, and here and there round the bay, I have seen villas and cottages, all low white buildings rich in marble, built close to the highway revelling in the dust. The style is everywhere the same ; a spacious lofty hall or receiving-room ; an inner room ; the wee garden ; occasionally a boudoir and library ; oftener a billiard-room ; the sleeping apartments out of sight, if anywhere ; in the hall or drawing-room, the *volante* or other family conveyance—the carriage, but not the horses ; the whole house open to view, the sun permitting, friendly and sociable. I was at a ball the other night at one of these villas. There was inside a

\* For the benefit of readers acquainted with the Spanish language, I think it right to subjoin the original :—

“ O Restos e imagen del grande Colon !  
Mil siglos durad guardados en la Urna,  
Y en la remembranza de nuestra nacion.”

The Seville inscription was hardly as bad :

“ A Castilla y a Leon  
Nuevo Mundo diò Colon.”

bevy of fair ladies and gallant gentlemen, chiefly German, American, and British; outside a motley crowd of people—Gallego water-carriers, Negroes, Chinese. Between the glittering show in the marble hall and the tattered and unwashed mob squatting on the road—between the gay performers and the grinning but well-behaved spectators—nothing but the iron gratings of the windows intervened. High and low life were there in presence, in the best of humours with each other, almost on speaking terms. Whatever green there is for miles round Havannah is to be found in the private grounds about these villas. Some of their gardens, and especially that of the Captain-General's country-seat adjoining the Botanic Gardens, exhibit all the pride and luxuriance of a tropical bower, with enormously tall and big "Róyal" palms, mango-trees, tamarinds, China laurels, and a prodigious variety of flower-beds. Everywhere else the land is bare, not flat, but in easy undulations which seldom rise to the pretensions of hills, but which, if clad with trees, might attain great loveliness. There are no sugar or tobacco estates in the immediate vicinity of Havannah; the ground, by no means barren, is laid out in dusty, and apparently niggardly crops. We have everywhere here piles of oranges, but I have yet to see an orange grove. Here and there are straggling, dilapidated avenues telling of better times; but the present generation are waging a ruthless war against all forest

timber; and yet on some of the promenades in the town China laurels only four years old, already give grateful shade and thrive down to the water's edge in sheer defiance of the ocean gales.

Both in and out of the town the elements of the beautiful are easily to be seen. There is nothing sublime or transcendent, but enough to justify the assertion that "one is sure to like Havannah." As things are now, however, the beauty is merely rudimentary. The natives have done nothing, apart from their own dwellings, to improve the spot, and they have exerted themselves to the utmost to spoil it. Havannah is still the city of smells and noises. The town boasts of an *Ayuntamiento*, or Municipal Corporation. It consists, I am told, almost entirely of *Peninsulares*, or native Spaniards, and must not be taken as an earnest given by the Cubans of their aptitude for self government. The townspeople pay very high rates, fabulously high rates; but they would be both able and willing to pay twice as much, if they could only know where the money goes, or, indeed if they were not too well aware how fast the money sticks to the fingers of the officials who handle it in every branch of State or City administration. The money does certainly not go for paving, sweeping, watering, cleaning, or clearing the streets. The railways and tramways crossing the new town in every

direction, are open cars. In many of the thoroughfares, though built and inhabited on both sides, the filth rises to such a height that neither volante nor victoria can venture into them. The harbour itself is a *Cloaca Maxima*, and the Hotel San Carlos, one of the best, which adjoins the wharves, is shunned as pestiferous in the summer season. When the wind is from the south the stench of the Bay pervades the whole town and poisons the very air of its flower-scented promenades; the blood from the public shambles, which drain into the harbour, colours its water for nearly half a mile from the shore.

And yet the town lies, as I said, between the harbour and the open sea, and the grounds might be as easily made to slope one way as the other. All along the rocky border of the open sea there runs a broad, semicircular street, the *Calle Ancha del Norte*, with several splendid bathing establishments, the baths dug in the pure coral rock, and perpetually washed by the sea-spray, though all closed at this season; for "who could dream of bathing in these cruel winter months with the thermometer at 83°?"—only eight degrees above summer heat! Along this shore any other people than the Cubans would long since have built stately crescents and terraces, rivalling the finest marine parades of Brighton or Scarborough; but not so here. Here "Broad North Street" exhibits a wretched row of straggling Negro huts, tenanted by the most

squalid population, every dwelling carefully turning its back upon the sea. Upon my allowing myself some observation on the subject, a British merchant advised me that "the natives should best know what suits them;" that the rocky shore is, at certain seasons, strewn with dead fish, by which the air is contaminated and the place rendered uninhabitable. But it occurs to me that the dead fish, of which by the way I can detect no trace, might with no great difficulty be carted or rowed away to the plantations, where it would supply excellent manure; and that, as to fever and cholera, if the town can defy the filth and stench of its own streets and harbour, it has little to dread from mere briny exhalations.

But even if the hapless stranger outlives the smells of Havannah he must in the long-run be killed by its sounds. There can be but little peace in private houses, and I know there is none in the hotels. Railways and tramways all run in the open streets in the American fashion. "Look out for the engine when the bell rings." Alas! the bell is perpetually ringing; the engine incessantly roaring; not giving the sharp shrill whistle by which tender ears are so cruelly tortured at Paddington, or Euston Square, but uttering weird unearthly yells, very like the dismal howl of Mr. Grote's monkey at the Regent's Park, but in a far higher key, as loud as the blasts of Astolfo's enchanted

horn in Ariosto's fable. For all the sugar in Cuba I declare that I would not fix my residence in a place where a man's nerves are put to such an excruciating daily and hourly trial. After two weeks' experience the noise drives me as utterly frantic as it did on the first day. And it little matters how far from the stations your abode may be chosen. Broad streets and low houses, and the thin elastic air, permit the horrid din to extend freely over the town and suburbs. Where you have not the railway, you have the ferries, and trains and steamers and mail-boats starting at every hour, at every unconscionable hour. Blending with the racket of the traffic you have the never-ending peal of church bells—morning bells, evening bells, midnight bells; the sturdy priests tugging away at the ropes on no ostensible pretext, and simply from a barbarous determination that where good Catholics wake no heretic shall presume to sleep. Add to this the rolling of the 6000 victorias, the tramway-cars, the omnibuses, the heavy waggons of every description, the clatter of *cafés* and billiard-rooms making night hideous, the jabber, the Babel of voices, the twang of guitars, the squeak of fiddles, the morning gun from the guard-ship at daybreak, the shrill trumpets of the volunteers at drill, and to crown all, the thumping at your door by some stupid waiter asking whether "you are *not* the gentleman who is to be off by the 5 o'clock train to Matanzas?"

Sum up all this, and then imagine how a man whose rest is thus eternally broken, and whose temper is consequently soured, can be induced to say that he "likes Havannah."

Looked at from a social point of view, what immediately strikes a stranger is that Havannah, like the Rome of Romulus, is a city without women. Out of a population of 205,000 souls, there die annually, if official statistics may be relied upon, 3682 white males to 1204 white females, while the deaths among the black or coloured people are, for the males, 1046, for the females, 1099. Thus while the sexual numbers of the negro and mulatto population are almost balanced, with respect to the whites the proportion is something more than three males to one female. The fact however is self-evident. Hardly any other women than negresses are to be seen about. Ladies, with any pretension to youth and beauty, would sooner die than venture out unprotected, hardly even for their early mass; and so uncommon is the sight of decent women unattended in the streets, that foreign ladies, unacquainted with the custom and sauntering from shop to shop, become the objects of a curiosity not unfrequently degenerating into impertinence. The causes of the disproportion between males and females are not far to seek. Besides the priests, the soldiers and sailors, and the public functionaries,

whose tenure of their places is extremely precarious, and whose sojourn in the Island is generally of the shortest—all people who are either absolutely debarred from marriage by the nature of their office, or who dread its encumbrances and responsibilities—there are here thousands of Spanish immigrants, mostly of the lower classes, attracted to the spot by high wages, but looking upon themselves as birds of passage, and who consequently would hardly dream of sending for women from home, while their contempt for the native race seldom allows them to look upon the Creole women with honourable intentions.

I need not dwell upon the obvious results of this state of things. Suffice it to say that regard for women is by no means enhanced by their scarcity. There ensues an exclusively male society. The charms of *café* and club life, such as they are, wean the Havannah husband from a home where real feminine accomplishments are as unknown as hearth-rugs or fire-irons. House-keeping in the town, and still more in the suburbs, is terribly up-hill work. Foreign Consuls and other strangers usually try it on their first arrival, but soon learn to look even upon the hotel, with its smells and noises, as a haven from domestic storms. Nothing like available free service is to be obtained in a slave-holding community. The laziness and, unless awed by the lash, the insolence of the negro bondman communicate themselves to the

hired "help," whatever be the colour, race or sex, working at the same task with him in a common household. Hence man's life in Havannah is wholly out of doors, while for women there is no real life within them. In no town of France or Italy have I ever seen so many, or, proportionately, such sumptuous and constantly crowded *cafés* and *restaurants*; and hardly in New York or Chicago are there so many "bars" for the manufacture of "cock-tails" and "sherry-cobblers." The Havannah merchant is as eager to make money as he is ready to squander it. But the town supplies little besides gross material enjoyment for his money. A box at his third-rate opera at the Tacon Theatre, and a drive in the dreary Prado, are all the amusements he can have in common with his wife and daughter. For the rest, the women are left to mope alone at home, playing bo-peep with the passers-by from their window-gratings, or pacing the flat roofs of their houses like so many sister Annes waiting for those who are never coming.

With so little wholesome domestic society, and all the consequent profligacy, it is pleasing to hear the character universally given for good conduct to the Havannah women. Few of them, even of the lowest orders, frequent the cock-pit or the bull-ring; and the professional profligacy, the symptoms of which are everywhere only too conspicuous and stare you in the face from many an open window in the principal

streets, is of Spanish or American, at all events altogether of foreign importation. The truth is we have here a whole society placed above want, and above such vice as springs from it. Dishonesty, at least on a small scale, does not pay; and the worst men or women soon find out that any occupation to which they may betake themselves is better than begging, thieving, or any other wrong-doing.

But the real bane of social life in Havannah lies in the deep-seated and hardly-smothered animosity of race, one and the same race yet irreconcilably divided against itself. There is no hatred in the world to be compared to that of the Cuban for Spain and everything Spanish. The Creole conceives that he alone is entitled to breathe the balmy air of his tropical island, and plainly intimates that he longs for the day in which he shall be rid of the Spanish, and of every other alien intruder coming here to suck the very life-blood from his veins. The Peninsular, or native Spaniard, who, in order to make things as he wishes, thinks that it is enough for him to declare that they are so, never mentions Cuba without calling it "this emphatically Spanish Island." He flatters himself that he has crushed the Creole, and affects to ignore him. The worst is that to a stranger's eye the split is nowhere apparent; the line of demarcation is not visibly drawn. The Guelph and Ghibelline go past with no outward distinction,

showing no symptom of the enmity which may at every moment array them in hostile camps. There is no open insurrection within more than 100 miles of Havannah; there has been no serious disturbance in the town since the bloody execution of March, 1871. But there is a vast amount of plot and intrigue fatal to all loyal, social, and even domestic intercourse; a depth of simulation and dissimulation, of spoken and acted lies, not to be fathomed by a stranger on a mere superficial survey. The Peninsular is sure of the day; the Cuban is confident of the morrow. The Spaniard relies on brute strength; the Cuban puts his trust in superior intelligence. Between the Insurgent bands in the field and their patriot associates in Havannah there is incessant and by no means unenterprising communication. The underground war is going on in every street and almost in every house in this city. The Spaniard fancies he can afford to treat the Creole with ineffable disdain. He taunts him with cowardice and unthrift; he looks upon him as a degenerate being, incapable of overt action, of manly resolution; and, perhaps, he is safe enough in Havannah itself. But the Cuban bides his time. He reckons on the chapter of accidents, on the chronic disorders of the Mother Country, on the sympathies of the American Union, of Mexico, of the Central and Southern American Republics, where the name of Spain is as heartily execrated as in the camp

of Cespedes himself, and, above all things, on the deluge that must needs ensue upon any attempt at the solution of the fatal slavery question. The Creole of the city is certainly a weakly, rickety, frivolous creature, distinguishable by his long scraggy neck and thin fluted legs, addicted to indolent habits and enervating pleasures, trained by long schooling to abject submission, destitute of all energy ; but there is, as he knows, better stuff among his brethren of the rural population. The Cuban travels and learns, and throughout the island education is more widely spread than among the ruling race, especially among the lower classes of prejudiced and bigoted Peninsular immigrants. The Spanish settlers own very nearly the mass of the landed property, and of the movable wealth of the country ; they have the lion's share of the trade of Havannah in their hands, partly in consequence of their superior thrift and activity, but in a great measure owing to the privileges and monopolies awarded to them by a partial, grasping and unscrupulous administration. The fortune accumulated by the Peninsular father not unfrequently goes to wreck and ruin in the hands of his improvident Creole progeny. Still, the base of the Peninsular prosperity, both agricultural and commercial, rests on slavery ; and the Creole thinks, not unreasonably, that with the abolition of slave-labour a new balance of fortune will have to be established, in which all the chances will be in

his own favour. In that intricate problem of the slave-system lies the whole political and moral question, and the Cuban is as anxious for its speedy solution as the Peninsular is doggedly bent on its indefinite adjournment.

With such a division of interests, with so hopeless a divergence of views and tendencies, it is easy to imagine the constraint, the mistrust, the ill-will everywhere pervading society in Havannah. None but the mere trader, the grasping shopkeeper, is at ease here. These constitute the only set of men to whom the great evil of Spanish misgovernment blows some good. For some of the Spanish, and even German, English, and other foreign shopkeepers, there is no spot in the world like this—no spot where money can be more easily made or more extravagantly squandered. Havannah is the traders' very paradise. All imported goods, owing to protective and differential tariffs, pay enormously heavy duties; hence, the merchant is entitled to sell dear. Fraud and smuggling are carried on to an outrageous extent; hence he is enabled to buy cheap. Paper money has raised the price of all commodities fifty per cent; hence he takes care to charge a hundred. He makes the best of the manifold calamities of the country, and hardly anything short of twice the cost of his merchandise seems to him fair profit. And to any stranger complaining of overcharge, he flatly and

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and scornfully observes that "people bent on small economies have no business to come to Havannah." In the estimation of such a man the present state of things is the best in this best of all imaginable worlds. He wishes it to last as long as it may, and not unfrequently he endeavours to perpetrate it by a seasonable stroke of "business" with the secret agents of the Insurgents in the field. And he is all the more indifferent and neutral, all the more blind to the real danger which encompasses him, as he looks upon himself as a mere bird of passage, living from hand to mouth, ready to flit on the first approach of serious disturbance, and sure to save the bulk of his ill-gotten gains from the waves that may at any moment surge around him. It is especially among these fair-weather friends of Cuba, foreign speculators from Germany, from America, from England—some of whom do not hesitate for a season to become naturalised Cubans and to embrace the Roman Catholic religion—that the newly-arrived traveler receives the assurance that "he cannot fail to be delighted with Havannah." To a shopkeeper with his soul in his till, Havannah is certainly "hub of the universe." Even the present commercial distress, entirely and exclusively arising from political apprehensions and leading to the enormous issue of paper money, is a godsend to him, as it enables him further to enhance prices which he was already contriving to raise to an exorbitant height.

The mere mention of paper money compels me to turn my attention to the subject with which the public here are at this moment most earnestly engrossed—the issue of treasury bonds to the amount of 20,000,000 dollars, or four millions of our own money. It is a loan intended, to some extent, to relieve the country of the intolerable burden of its paper currency. This Island which only eight years ago was described as an Eldorado, especially by travelers who, fresh from the United States, contrasted its overflow of ounces and doubloons with the sluggishness of the “greenbacks” they had left behind in the war-distracted Union—this plethoric community where copper coinage was unknown, and even a mendicant never expected less than a *medio real*, or two-pence-halfpenny, is now in its turn flooded with bank-notes ranging from the value of a thousand dollars to that of ten and five cents; and as an aggravation of its misery, it had even to send to New York for the plates from which its flimsy currency, a perfect facsimile of the greenback, is printed. The causes of this financial distress are a mystery to no man here. The “Spanish Bank of Havannah,” a purely private institution, involved itself in the utmost difficulties by advancing large sums to the Madrid Government at the time of the Mexican, Chilian and Peruvian wars, and has been allowed to issue paper to an enormous and, what is worse, to an unknown amount.

Hence a depreciation of the currency and a total disappearance of gold and silver to such an extent that Spanish gold has risen to twenty-five per cent. premium, and foreign exchange to fifty-two per cent. The projected loan would, it was hoped, lead if not to a speedy resumption of specie payments at least to some check in this fearful depreciation of the currency. A decree of the Spanish Government authorised the issue of bonds to the amount of 60,000,000 dollars, a permission of which the Cuban Treasury, by way of a first essay, availed itself only for one-third of the sum. The Madrid Government might well afford its cheap generosity, as the decree said nothing about guarantee or security, and all efforts to make any one responsible for the payment of either capital or interest have been unsuccessful, so that the lenders must venture their money at their own peril. Under such circumstances there could be no doubt that the loan would turn out an egregious failure, though the Treasury was to receive paper, and both to pay eight per cent. interest, and to supply the sinking fund, in gold. Any financial operation more ruinous to the borrower, or more advantageous to the lender, could not be conceived, as the Government—unlike that of the United States in similar circumstances—is bound to accept payment for all taxes and duties in its own depreciated paper; and when it needs gold to meet the new obligations arising from the loan, it will have to buy it at the pre-

sent exorbitant price. Notwithstanding such strong temptations to the lender, the great capitalists hang back, and hitherto only subscriptions to inconsiderable amounts have been received. It is generally surmised that the wealthiest merchants in Havannah, many of whom are also owners of large plantations, whose interests are strongly connected with slave-labour, are only temporarily withholding their aid in order to make the Government fully aware of its weakness and their strength, reserving themselves to come to the rescue in their own good time, and on their own terms, giving the Government to understand that they, and they alone, are the masters of the situation, and must be allowed to manage and settle social and political questions, and especially the question of Negro Slavery, in the manner that may seem most expedient to them.

Little as I may be disposed to admire the Spanish Government, either in Madrid or in Havannah, I must confess that were it even animated by the most benevolent intentions it would here find itself utterly powerless for good. The Zorrilla Ministry sent to Havannah an *Intendente de Hacienda*, or Secretary for Finance, Señor Villamil, who enjoyed in Madrid an unblemished reputation for integrity. I was the other day congratulating one of the English residents here—a dealer in ready-made clothes—on this appointment, from which I augured a disposition on the part of the

Government to turn over a new leaf, when the man cut me short with the remark, "No, no; the new Intendente won't do for us. Fancy, he is such an ass as to think that he can put down contraband. Why, how could trade in Cuba ever go on without it?" I related the conversation to the Intendente himself, who smiled and said, "Nonsense, there is no contraband whatever; and no one would be at the trouble and peril of smuggling in Cuba, when he can bribe the custom-house officers to any extent and on any terms. It is this bribery and corruption that I complain of and which I am determined to put an end to were it to cost me my place and my life." And he really set to work to clean the Augean stable, though with what ultimate success I know not.

It was chiefly with a view to promote the emission of the Loan that Señor Villamil was sent as Intendente to Havannah. On his first interview with the Governors of the Bank he intimated that, in order to allay the panic arising from the long continuance of financial distress and to restore the credit so far as was practicable, he deemed it advisable to burn paper money to an amount corresponding to the twenty millions of the Loan itself. The proposal was received with acclamation. "Certainly, sir," broke out one of the Governors; "by all means, and with great pleasure. Burn twenty millions? To be sure! Forty, if you wish it. Have we not got the plates?" (*No*

*tenemos las Planchas ?*) Alas ! it was the use and abuse of these plates that alone could have plunged into financial difficulties an Island the yearly exports of which exceed 100,000,000 dols. or £20,000,000.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE INSURRECTION.

News of the War—Its Character—Nature of the Country—The Troops—The Insurgents—Difficulties of the Situation—Disposition of the Population—Unpopularity of the Government—Its Character.

WE are indebted to the *Diario de la Marina* for reminding us that we are in a state of insurrection. There is a civil war raging somewhere in Cuba. This is the depth of winter, a fact which, with the weather glass at 83° in the shade, we are rather apt to forget; it is the only season in the year propitious to military operations. The troops are in full march, and official bulletins reporting their progress are forwarded from head-quarters and find their way into the daily papers. Such a commanding officer with certain battalions has “come up with an Insurgent band far away in some spot above Guantanamo in the district

of Santiago de Cuba, in the south-eastern extremity of the Island. To attack the rebels and completely to rout them was for the heroic Spanish troops one and the same thing. . They killed many of them, wounded many more, and took fourteen horses and one rifle." In another report we hear that there were "three rebels killed, seven prisoners, one of these latter wounded; three muskets were taken, and fifteen small arms; two able-bodied men surrendered." In another encounter the trophies were "six prisoners and a mule." And, again, two prisoners and three fire-arms with the surrender of forty between women and children (*personas de familia*). These monotonous and somewhat meagre accounts constitute the annals of the war. The bulletins are almost stereotyped, one seemingly a transcript of the other. By the people here they are read with a sneer and a shrug of the shoulders. Not that the reports need be altogether disbelieved, or that more credit should be given to the counter-statements circulating in whispers among the disaffected, by which the alleged encounters are celebrated as rebel victories. To hear these, the rebels' horses cannot have been taken in open fight, as the Insurgents have no horses, but from the inoffensive and defenceless peasantry upon whom the troops wreak the vengeance of their defeats. As to the killed and wounded, the prisoners, the women and children who surrendered, they are the ill-fated owners

of the horses, who are treated as rebels if they venture to raise any complaint about the loss of their property. It little matters to which of the conflicting versions we listen, for in point of "imaginative" powers there is not a doit to choose between Creoles and Peninsulars. The phenomenon is that such skirmishing should go on from day to day for four years without more decisive results, and that, while both parties are at the trouble of inventing, they should task our credulity to no greater lengths.

All allowance being made for gross exaggeration on both sides, there can be little doubt about the ruthless character of these Cuban hostilities. So long as I only read printed reports, I might be loth to believe that "women and children have been murdered after nameless outrages; whole families hacked to pieces, prisoners invariably killed after horrible tortures—roasted alive, or their bodies mutilated with grotesque indecency;" but a closer approach to the scene of action has made me somewhat less sceptic, and at all events there can be no doubt that there is a vast deal of shooting in cold blood, as is freely admitted, not without much boasting, on either side. And property fares no better than human life in the belligerents' hands. I know from the very best authority that in the district of Trinidad de 'Cuba, one of the oldest settlements in the central department of the Island, about two-thirds of the sugar and coffee estates, and

of the *potreros*, or grazing farms, were either destroyed or abandoned, and thrown out of cultivation before the end of 1871. That magnificent valley was turned into a state of desolation from which it is now with difficulty struggling to recover. The same has been the fate of many of these old settlements in the central districts. Of late the movement has taken an easterly direction; the Insurgent bands are more frequently heard of in the neighbourhood of Puerto Principe, Santiago, and Guantanamo, beyond the *Trocha*, or military cordon, which the Spanish troops have established at Moron.

The nature of this war was determined partly by the conditions of the country, and partly by the nature of the combatants. The island of Cuba is divided into three main departments,—the Western, of which Havannah is the capital, and which, so far as we can depend on the results of the census, had, in 1872, 1,034,616 inhabitants; the central, capital Puerto Principe, with only 75,725 inhabitants; the eastern, capital Santiago de Cuba, with 249,096. The western department is the smallest, mostly level, and the narrowest from sea to sea; it is in a great measure settled and prosperous, and here are the large sugar factories and the tobacco plantations which constitute the enormous wealth of the island. In the central department, out of the 75,725 inhabitants,

50,585 live in the capital, Puerto Principe. If we allow only a few thousands for each of the towns of the department—Trinidad, Sagua la Grande, Villa Clara, San Juan de los Remedios, etc.,—we must come to the conclusion that its rural districts are a mere desert, a large portion of the territory consisting of savannahs which are deemed irreclaimable, and of dense forest or mere brushwood which is also looked upon as doomed to unmitigated barrenness. Of whatever was available and brought into cultivation, not a little has succumbed to the havoc of the civil war. On the eastern side, which boasted the oldest colonies—Santiago, Baracoa, Bayamo, Guantanamo, etc.,—the valleys up to a certain height had been made fruitful, and the mountains were covered with flourishing coffee estates, but not a little of the interior was left in a state of nature, and vast tracts are marked even in recent maps, as “waste and uninhabited mountains,” or “uncultivated and unexplored regions.” (*Montes desiertos e incultos; terrenos inhabitados e incultos.*) The Sierra Maestra, or main chain, running along the whole southern coast from Cabo Cruz to Punta de Mayzi, rises to a height of 8000 feet, *i.e.*, on a level with the loftiest Apennines. What culture there was in this region is rapidly disappearing. Many of the landowners, with such wealth as they were able to save from the wreck of their estates, have migrated to the United States, to Jamaica, or other

British possessions; others have sold their slaves and cattle to the planters of the western or Havannah department; and even in those districts from which, out of sheer exhaustion, the scourge of war has been removed, agriculture and industry find it difficult to revive, owing to the want of public confidence, as well as to the utter absence of capital and labour.

The western department has remained untouched throughout the struggle. Havannah has little reason to distress itself about the Cuban Insurrection. This prosperous, pleasure-loving city can afford to make itself as easy about Cespedes and his rebels as New York ever was as to the skirmishes with the Modoc or other Red Indians on the borders of the remotest territories, or Milan with respect to Pallavicini's attacks on the brigand fastnesses in the Basilicata. Indeed, as I have before hinted, the Havannah people have had not only nothing to lose, but simply too much to gain from the calamities by which two-thirds of the Island have been laid desolate. Havannah is the centre of an extensive net of railways—about 1000 miles as I learn from the 'Guide'—opening an easy and tolerably safe communication with Matanzas, Cardenas, and Sagua la Grande on the northern coast, with Villa Clara in the centre, and with Batabanò and Cienfuegos on the southern coast. Havanna has also a regular weekly steam-packet inter-

course on the north with Matanzas, Cardenas, Sagua, Caibarien, Nuevitas, Jibara, and Baracoa; and, on the south with Batabanò, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, Las Tunas, Santa Cruz, Manzanillo, Santiago, and Guantanamo. But away from the wastes, and beyond the lines of railway, there is a vast debatable ground in which the Insurrection can run riot, threatening now one, now another district, shifting its quarters according as it can hope to find means of subsistence, avoiding encounters, and escaping pursuit by withdrawing to its recesses of impervious forests or inaccessible mountains. The war which the troops attempt to wage against the insurgent bands, owing to the extreme heat and unhealthiness of the climate is only practicable in the winter months, between November and May. Even in the immediate neighbourhood of the cities, say half-a-mile from Havannah itself, the roads are abominable—mere tracks with deep ruts and holes, without the least attempt at macadamization; such highways as hardly any country in Europe, the Spanish Peninsula alone excepted, can any longer show. The troops at the opening of the campaign are conveyed either by land or by sea to the localities where the railway or the steamer can bring them nearest to the suspected haunts of the Insurgents; and thence, after a few miles, they plunge into the forest, drawn up in two, three, or more columns, each column cutting its way through the thick of the wood as it advances,

until it falls in with the enemy who, after a few shots from the vantage ground of his ambush, seeks safety in a precipitate retreat to still more tangled thickets and still more arduous mountain fastnesses. In frequent instances the troops, which are but indifferently served by spies and which by reason of the nature of the ground and their own paucity of numbers are incapable of deploying, investing or surrounding the enemy, wander for days and weeks without seeing a rebel; and a commissioner of the "New York Herald," who, anxious "to see the fun," as he said, asked and obtained permission to follow one of the columns in an attack on a mountain gorge near Guantiano, had to come back after a very fatiguing ride which turned out a mere wild goose chase, the gorge being as silent and solitary as it may have been before it was first trodden by mortal footsteps. The Insurrection which first broke out at Yara in the territory of Bayamo, the native place of Cespedes, in the eastern department, spread at first into the central districts and ravaged the territory of the "Cinco Villas," threatening each of them, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, etc., by turns; but routed at many points, it again shifted its ground to the eastern department, to that region of *Montes Desiertos e Terrenos Incultos*, where the troops can make no headway against it. Once only, in the whole course of four years, did the Insurrection show any disposition to abandon its defensive attitude, and this was when by

a *coup de main* it swooped down upon Holquin, an inland town above Jibara. But even then the Insurgents only held the town for a few hours, and withdrew without awaiting an encounter with the troops, after plundering the helpless inhabitants. From other towns the volunteers have hitherto at all times been sufficiently strong to ward off rebel attacks.

It is the opinion of competent persons that had the Madrid Government been able and willing to send a force of 30,000 or 40,000 men, choosing its best troops, and at once setting them to carve wide military roads through the bush, sweeping the whole rebel region as if by a grand *battue* on a well-laid and comprehensive plan, the disturbance would long since have been at an end; for the fighting powers of the Insurgents are absolutely below contempt. But the Spanish Government has always sent its forces by mere dribblets—at the utmost 4000 or 5000 at a time; it has sent, not unfrequently, volunteer battalions from the cities, raw and unseasoned recruits—in a recent instance, 1000 Carlist prisoners, mere undisciplined and ill-conditioned bandits—and it has limited its efforts to guerilla operations; a wayward and desultory mode of warfare in which its opponents were fully able to meet it with equal weapons. Of late the Government has had recourse to a strategy of *Trochas*,

or military *cordons*, intended not to suppress the Insurrection but only to hem it in if possible within certain limits. A line of that description has, as I said, been drawn from Moron all across the country to the southern coast; thereby acknowledging the impotence of the troops to occupy and thoroughly subdue the interior of at least one half of the Island. Upon this footing it is reckoned the war has already led to the destruction of 150,000 human lives; though the men actually slain in battle may perhaps be counted by hundreds, while the thousands on the part of the Insurgents have fallen victims to military executions after capture, and on the part of the soldiers to fever and cholera, the consequences of prolonged hardships, bad and scanty food, unsheltered quarters, and the insalubrity of the climate. Competent military authorities have no great opinion of the tactics by which the Spanish generals now hope to shut in and encompass the rebels by their *cordons*, so as to isolate and localise the war. The scheme, they think, is a mere delusion; for on the one hand the whole Spanish fleet would be insufficient to blockade the many little bays and inlets with which the extensive coasts of the island are everywhere indented, protected as they are by their numberless *cayos*, or coral reefs covered with verdure which form a perfect shoal of islets stretching far out to sea and perplexing navigation by their endless maze of intri-

cate channels; and, on the other hand, the forests in these regions are not only impenetrable, but, as experience has proved, actually indestructible by fire, and their growth is so rapid that the tracks made in the winter are almost utterly obliterated before the summer is over, while the mountain ridges, rising one behind the other, enable the guerilla bands to cross from vale to vale, and from glen to glen, with a bewildering rapidity which seems to multiply their forces and invest them with the gift of ubiquity. There is a bare possibility that the Insurrection may end in the utter extermination of the Insurgents by breaking open and laying bare all their forest lairs and mountain haunts, and intersecting the most savage districts with nets of roads and railroads, such as neither Cuba nor Spain herself can boast. But an enterprise of that nature would require heroic, gigantic, and, above all, sustained and unremitting exertions. It could not be achieved by fits and starts—not by a five or six months' campaign, nor by any series of them. As to any possibility of starving, or wearying, or disheartening the Insurgents, that seems out of the question. They appear to be well supplied with arms and money; they live on the wild fruits of the earth, on the yams, bananas, cocoa-nuts, and other productions which they, or their families, or the many free negroes enlisted in their ranks, cultivate in the small patches of the uninvaded districts; they have also

abundance of game, and they feast especially on a wild rat of a peculiar kind, as large as a cat and as tender as a kid, the flavour of which they prefer to that of any other meat. They rely for recruits, or anything else they may want, on the sympathies of the Creole or native population throughout the island, and in Havannah itself; and where the goodwill of their friends fails, the greed and avarice of their enemies come to their aid; for there are men in Havannah and other cities—Spaniards and others—who, where there is anything to be gained, are as little scrupulous about dealing with the one as with the other belligerent, and who, while supplying the soldiers would sell their very souls to the Insurgents, if these latter had any occasion for such a commodity, and could afford to pay for it. Nay more! I have been assured, though I have great reluctance in believing it, that some of the colonels and other officers in command of the columns of regular troops, manage to prolong hostilities either by ignoring the enemy when they have him in their toils and could compel him to give battle, or by showing great slowness and remissness in the pursuit when they have routed and put him to flight. Their dishonourable conduct seems to be actuated either by a desire to perpetuate a struggle which leads to speedy promotion, or by some other consideration of a baser and more sordid consideration.

There is nothing more difficult than to say where, in Havannah or in the other cities, the Insurrection has its partisans or its adversaries. Men live here in abject fear, mistrust, and hatred of each other. The white population of the island may be reckoned in round numbers at 700,000, including the so-called "Yucatec," or half-caste Mexicans from Yucatan and other provinces, and the Chinese coolies who, oddly enough, are set down not among yellow but white men. Of the 700,000, there are from 100,000 to 150,000 Peninsular or native Spaniards, including among them the regular troops and the Government officials. The Spaniards are to be found almost exclusively in Havannah and the other large cities. They are merchants, shopkeepers, shopmen, porters, boatmen, hackney-coachmen, water-carriers, that is they do such of the hard work of the towns as does not devolve upon the negroes, slave or free. They are, for the most part, immigrants from the northern provinces of Spain, Galicia, Asturias, the Basque principalities, Catalonia, and Aragon. In fact, they belong to the hardiest and most laborious population of the Peninsula. They are attracted to this country by high wages; a boatman never charges less than a dollar—four shillings—for a few minutes' rowing from the pier to a ship in harbour; and they come singly and without families. I have already said that in no place in the world is there such a popula-

tion of unmarried men as in Havannah. In frequent instances, these men who come out as penniless adventurers, scrape together large fortunes, and some of them attain the highest rank in trade and even in society. They are mostly young when they land, unencumbered and able to bear arms; and it is from them that the volunteer battalions, which constitute the main strength of the Spanish party and the real sovereign power in the island, are chiefly recruited. Although the Creoles are not absolutely excluded from the volunteer service they form an inconsiderable minority in the ranks in the large cities, and are only numerous in the rural battalions, or in those organised in the minor towns. The Creole population may amount to 500,000 or 600,000 persons; but if we deduct the women, the old men, and the children, we must conclude that they could with difficulty muster as many as 200,000 able-bodied men, and these would scarcely be a match for the 100,000 Spaniards, even independently of the compact force and the excellent organisation and training of the volunteers of the cities. As the Peninsulars or immigrant Spaniards in Cuba may be considered—physically, at least—the best specimens of the Spanish race, so the Cuban Creoles must be set down as the puniest and most timid of all Creoles. There is something effeminate and vicious in their early training which seems to stunt them in their growth. You

can tell the Cuban from the Spaniard at one glance, whether you meet him in the street, or whether you walk after him. The hatred between the two races is intense—hardly disguised contempt on one side, and smothered impotent rancour and thirst for revenge on the other. Long misgovernment, haughtiness, cruelty, bigotry, rapacity and venality have conspired for centuries to heap up all this ill-will against Spanish officials, not only in the Antilles, but in all other Spanish colonies and dependencies. In Cuba this deep-seated resentment has not yet found its vent. It awaits an opportunity; and meanwhile seeks relief in hearty wishes for the indefinite prolongation and for the ultimate success of the Insurrection. Without foreign aid, however, success for the Insurrection is not to be expected; and there are not many Cubans who flatter themselves about it. Even were Spain utterly crippled and paralysed at home, and were she forced to withdraw her troops and leave the Island to its fate, it is very questionable whether the Creole population would gain the upper hand, at least in the cities. A savage instinct of self-preservation and despair would probably prompt the Peninsulars to provide for their safety by the utter extermination of the Creole race—a work to which an enforced emancipation of the negroes might easily lend its hand. Some vague scheme of re-colonising the country by the infusion of fresh Spanish blood seems

to be entertained, if one may judge from the provision made in favour of the soldiers who are promised a liberal grant of Cuban land upon the expiration of their term of service against the Insurgents. But the scheme is simply chimerical. The physical and moral superiority of the Spaniard over the Creole is not transmissible to his descendants born in Cuba, any more than the feeling of loyalty and attachment to the Mother Country. Degeneracy and disaffection invariably set in at the second or third generation; and nothing is more common than to see the son of the stoutest merchant or planter of Spanish origin, especially if born of a Cuban mother, contract the habits and feelings of the natives, and show every disposition to make common cause with them. The wealthiest and most conspicuous Creole families, such as the Aldamas, the Tuanas, etc., either have some of their members in the ranks of the Insurgents, or are busy promoting their cause in foreign countries. Among the rash students who were put to death or sent to gaol in consequence of the fatal riot of November, 1871, were misguided youths belonging to the most conservative and ultra-Spanish families in Havannah; for the life of one of them a rich relative, one of the potentates of the Spanish Club, vainly offered a ransom of a million of dollars. From the nature of that riot, and from the previous massacres of the Villanueva Theatre, and of

the Café Restaurant del Louvre, in March, 1869, it is easy to infer the animosity between the Peninsular and the Creole, and to foresee to what extremities it might lead were not the Creole party cowed by its own faint-heartedness and dissimulation. In all these tragic occurrences the Creole acted upon the impulse of impotent and unreasoning spite; the Peninsular wreaked a blind but wholesale and deliberate revenge. In 1869, it was a set of foolish young men displaying the Cuban colours, blue and white, and singing patriotic songs, or giving a performance in the Tacon Theatre for the benefit, as they said, of the Cuban "Insolvents"—meaning Insurgents—and a crowd of volunteers breaking in upon them and pouring volleys into the café or theatre, indifferent whether the presumed offenders or innocent by-standers fell victims to their rage\*. In 1871, it was another set of still sillier young men, defacing—it is not known in what manner—the graves of some of the heroes of the Peninsular party at the cemetery, and the volunteers laying hold of them, dragging them before an improvised court-martial in defiance of all constituted authorities, and proceeding to instant execution of the sentence with such a precipitancy and secrecy that the

\* From the scene of the massacre, their fury not being yet assuaged, they proceeded to the House of Aldama, a splendid building on the Field of Mars, and overhauled and destroyed whatever was in it.

terrified city knew nothing of it till late in the afternoon. When the official journal, with its wonted veracity, announced that "some negroes had killed a volunteer, and that two of them had been summarily shot at the *Punta*,"—the *Lugar de los Patibulos*—at the back of the town jail. Such are the scenes of the past; unfrequent occurrences now, as the Creoles are awed by the terrible lessons they have received, and the Peninsulars, reassured by their easy victories, fancy they have no longer anything to fear.

One feeling however Spaniards and Creoles may be said to have in common, and this is hatred for the Spanish Government and its officials. The Spaniards find it for their interest to identify themselves with the Mother Country and with its rulers, so long as in their name they contrive to have both the Government and the native population at their discretion, and so long as under the name of the Spanish Crown, they can manage to defy or to baffle the intimations of foreign Powers, and the outcry of public opinion for negro emancipation. While between themselves and Spain they are able to maintain the *status quo*, they are sufficiently willing to go hand-in-hand with Spain. But, in all other respects, the vast majority are keenly alive to the wrongs this and all other colonies have had at all times to endure at the hand of the Mother Country, and are

sick at heart of the tyranny, the corruption, the rapacity, the overbearing pride of the placemen sent hither to drain the Cuban milch-cow to the last drop. It is vain for men in Spain to point to the privileges and advantages hitherto existing, and vouchsafed to the colonies in defiance of the very letter of the Spanish law—the right to hold slaves, exemption from military conscription and certain institutions which practically perpetuate in some families the possession of their large estates by preventing territorial subdivision. It is vain for them to remind the colonies of the various attempts made, at one time, to extend to these Transatlantic regions all the statutes and liberties wrung from the Central Government by successive revolutions; at another time, to screen them from obnoxious measures by the grant of special laws and constitutions. No engagement has ever been entered into by Spain with her colonies that she has not frequently broken; and no other rule than absolute and arbitrary tyranny has ever been exercised by her agents. Were it even otherwise, were even the present Government of Madrid actuated by the best intentions, its gifts would be resolutely and disdainfully spurned. Cuba is unwilling to be governed by Spain, however unable she may be to govern herself. She is only anxious not to be too shamefully nor too flagrantly robbed, and the sole business of all Spanish officials, from the Captain-General to the meanest

custom-house officer, seems to have been till very lately to systematise wholesale robbery. "*Robamos todos*" (we are all thieves) was the remark of a public functionary of high rank the other day to a wealthy Creole, who, with an assenting smile and a bow, begged that he would "speak for himself." All this till very lately—because the officer who is now acting Captain-General, General Cevallos, and the *Intendente* of Finance, Señor Villamil, are credited with good intentions to introduce some reforms in the Administration; but already the Governor frankly acknowledges his determination to throw up his post as soon as he may be allowed; and my friend, the ready-made clothes merchant, is determined to make the country "too hot" for the "over-scrupulous" financial agent. The evil has roots too deep to be reached by a few well-meaning men, and the mistrust and rancour arising from the misgovernment of centuries are not to be shaken by any timid and precarious measures in the right direction. Till Spain can establish a wise, honest, and durable government—and she seems now further from it than ever—the colonies will vainly look to her for the redress of their all-pervading grievances. With the exception of some grovelling trader who, as I have said, only thinks of his present gains, and trusts that when change has become inevitable, he will be able to betake himself and his earnings to some other country, the Spanish Govern-

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ment can rely upon no man in this colony. With the native Cuban, reconciliation is altogether and for ever out of the question ; and with the Spanish planter or man of property having a permanent stake in the land, there is nothing but a hollow truce, likely to last only while the great question of Negro Slavery is pending, and while the slave-owner can hope either to put off its solution indefinitely, or to settle it in his own specious and illusory way. Should that bond of complicity between the Spanish Government and the slave-owner be broken, as it must needs be within a few years, at all events, nothing is more likely than the two hostile parties—Creole and Peninsular—will join in a common effort to shake off the irksome yoke of the Madrid Government. How they afterwards might, in that case, settle their local differences, is utterly impossible to foresee ; impossible to guess which of the two parties might develop any aptitude for government, or to what foreign element they would have to turn to establish order and maintain peace between them.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CUBAN SLAVES.

The Carnival—News from Spain—Spain and Cuba—The Slavery Question—White, Black, and Yellow—Condition of the Slaves—Prospects of Emancipation—The Lion in the Path.

CARNIVAL has been here in full tide, and its routs, balls and other festivities are being prolonged throughout the early Lent. The people here as elsewhere have their own way of enjoying themselves, but they are least successful when they attempt to amuse themselves in other people's way; and the Carnival does not certainly come natural to them. The masquerading drive at the *Paseo* in Havannah is nearly as flat as the same display at the *Fuente Castellana* in Madrid, but it is infinitely more gorgeous, because the colony, notwithstanding the civil war, the paper money and the unsuccessful loan, is better off than the Mother



country. The Island numbers several titled families, though very few that can lay claim to ancient noble descent; but of men of low rank who have accumulated colossal fortunes, and who are in as great a hurry to squander as they were to make them, the name is legion; and these turn out so long a line of equipages—coaches-and-four, coaches-and-six, bewigged coachmen, be-laced footmen, postillions and outriders—to say nothing of highly-bedizened, powdered, bare-armed and bare-shouldered women, as might shame anything that Paris ever boasted in the palmy days of the *Grand Monarque*. Much pomp and glitter may be seen here, and some attempt at humour in paste-board noses; but as to taste and genuine fun, you must ask me no questions. The thought that not a little of the grandeur displayed is the result of wealth made by the slave-trade, seems to force itself on the actors as well as on the spectators; and it is scarcely relieved by the association of that trade with American shoddyism—mustering very strong here at this winter season, and coming in for more than its share of the gaudy pageantry. On the whole, the impression is that there is such a gathering of ill-gotten wealth in Havannah as no other spot in the world could show; and the effect of the exhibition is anything but cheering.

I do not know to what extent care may be drowned

in noisy revels, but, independently of the Carnival, the people here show little anxiety either as to Spanish politics or their own financial difficulties. No one away from this Island could believe how little its population have been moved by the first tidings of the late events in Madrid. It was with the utmost tranquillity and apathy that the announcement of the abdication of King Amadeus I., and the proclamation of a Spanish Republic, was received here on Thursday last, February 13th; the intelligence was, as a matter of course, withheld from the public for more than twenty-four hours by the jealous authorities, always apprehensive of disturbance; but their caution was altogether superfluous. The news fell perfectly flat among the people, and was not even vehemently discussed in the clubs or *cafés*. The new Colonial Minister in Madrid, we were told, speaking in the name of his colleagues, assures the Peninsulars here that "the main object of the Republic is to maintain the integrity of the Spanish territory," or, in other words, not to part with Cuba. Those who wish to retain Cuba must allow it to continue as it is. The Captain-General in command here, in a manifesto published on Friday, the 14th, expresses his own readiness and that of the colony to accept "any government that may spring from the free exercise of popular suffrage in the Peninsula." And, no doubt, hardly any change of government in Spain can

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seriously affect the state of affairs in Cuba—unless the change should lead to the establishment of a wise, strong, and provident Government in the Peninsula; a thing not to be expected from any revolution; and, least of all, from one in a Republican sense. The Cubans have simply laughed at the idea of Figueras, Castelar, and their democratic friends coming into power; and they look upon the Republic of 1873 as a mere “Carnival farce.” For the rest, every man in this country is well aware that Cuban questions must be settled in Cuba itself. The Peninsulars who, for the present, constitute the ruling race, have little faith in and less love for a Spanish Republic; and they feel confident that, whatever may be the government in the Mother Country, no man would have either the power or the inclination to shake their own ascendancy, or would venture to interfere with their “peculiar institution.” Slavery, they flatter themselves, is as safe under Castelar as it ever was under Prim or Zorrilla. “There is not a man likely to come into power in Madrid,” said the prince of slave-owners to me the other day, “but has his price. When Prim contemplated the sale of Cuba in 1869, 100,000 dollars opportunely administered, induced him to reconsider the proposal; and, even previous to the king’s abdication and Zorrilla’s retirement, the obnoxious bill respecting abolition in Porto Rico had, on consideration, been withdrawn.” Slavery, in the opinion of such men, is a matter which

concerns the slave-owners alone, and with which nobody else should presume to meddle. The various Spanish Ministers which follow each other every three months, may brag and bluster about their determination to listen to the voice of outraged humanity in behalf of negro bondmen; but the slave-owners in this Island feel confident that "if Spain proposes, Cuba disposes." Anything that prolongs anarchy in Spain, that threatens her disintegration, and perplexes the world as to her destinies, favours that complication of affairs which lays the colony and its Creole population at the slave-owners' discretion.

For their own part, the Creoles or Cubans themselves wish not for a Spanish Republic, but for a Republic of their own. What they aspire to is independence; and for this, as they know, they have to settle accounts, not so much with the Madrid Government as with that Peninsular party, that *Casino Español* and those Volunteer Battalions which constitute the strength of the slave-system, and by which they have been overcome in all encounters. I have heard my friend, the man who keeps an "Almacen de Ropas Hechas," or ready-made clothes—an Englishman, an out-spoken individual—justify the cruel execution of eight students in March, 1871, as an inestimable blessing; or, as he expressed himself, "a capital job," inasmuch as it thoroughly crushed and cowed the Creoles, and esta-

blished order through sheer terror. There is indisputably some truth in this. The Volunteers have made a "solitude" and call it "peace;" and for some of the faint-hearted Cubans even such a peace is better than strife. This peace or truce is not likely to be disturbed by any news from Spain.

After all, the whole question of the Cuban Insurrection is subordinate to that of slave and free labour, and must be studied not merely in Cuba, but also in other countries where slavery has lately ceased to exist; especially in the old French colony of Hayti or San Domingo, in the British West Indian Islands—Jamaica, Barbadoes, Trinidad, etc.—and in the Southern States of the American Union. When the early discoverers of these regions described them as an earthly paradise, they conceived that their Eden, if it was to be a garden, had to be cultivated; and the question arose as to the race which could and should do the hard agricultural work for them. The native Indian population, peaceful but feeble, were unfit for the purpose; and in Cuba, as in the sister islands, the Red Indians, who in 1492 were somewhat vaguely reckoned at one million, were totally exterminated before a century had elapsed. Long before that time, by an order I regret to say of the pious Isabella, the Catholic queen, and with the sanction of the chivalrous Columbus himself, the importation of negroes from the west coast of Africa began; and it

was soon settled that the negroes alone, reduced to the condition of slavery, were to do the hard work of the Islands, the white men driving them as masters or overseers. The population of Cuba, if I can trust official Spanish statements, for the accuracy of which I will not make myself answerable, amounted in 1772 to 273,770 souls; of these 135,559 were whites, and 138,211 black or coloured men; the immense majority if not all, of these latter, were slaves. After a century we find that the population has risen to 1,370,211, of whom 764,750 are whites, and 605,461 black or coloured people. Of these latter 225,938 are free, and 379,523 slaves. These figures rest on the Census of 1867, since which epoch the movement of the population has been considerable. The Cubans themselves rather loosely compute the population of the present day in round numbers at 1,500,000, and the number of slaves at 500,000. Only the blacks of pure African blood, and their unmixed progeny, are held in this climate to be eminently fit for hard agricultural work of any kind, and especially for the cultivation of sugar. The whites, and chiefly the Spaniards, the Hindoo and Chinese coolies, or labourers, who have lately been imported—about 60,000 in Cuba alone—cannot do either the same kind or the same amount of work; while as to their children, the Creoles or natives of the Island—the word “Creole” in the West Indies applies without distinction to

all human beings and also to animals born in the Islands—all are said to dwindle in size, in strength, in spirit and energy with every new generation; so that whatever grows in these regions, except the pure black, becomes as inefficient for useful agricultural purposes as were the Red Indians who greeted Columbus on his landing. All this may be true in the main, but must not be taken absolutely to the letter. The bane of the Creole is less weakness than indolence, and the negro turns out the most indolent of human beings unless he works on compulsion. The natives of Spain, especially from the Pyrenean and Cantabrian districts, the Chinese and Hindoos on their first importation and during their lifetime, can be and are employed in the plantations almost, if not quite, as profitably as the blacks. But little can be made out of their children; and as little of Mulattos, Quadroons, *Mestizos*, and other mongrel races springing from the intermarriage, or, as the Yankees have it, "miscegenation" of the various main stocks. These mongrel races often gain in intelligence what they lose in strength; but are said to become more unfit not only for hard work, but even for the propagation of their hybrid species at every new crossing.

What the Cuban and other planters required was a supply of Africans, either newly imported or bred in the Island out of their own stock. Blood [in the

negro is of much value as in the Arab horse. By the aid of negro labour Cuba has been for several years producing crops of sugar which in good seasons amount to 800,000 tons, and the exportation of which often brings a sum of £12,000,000 or £15,000,000, and, very lately, even of £20,000,000. The Island is, as we all know, very rich in tobacco, coffee, rice, cotton, and other tropical produce; but the Cubans seem to think only of their sugar. They have lately been turning some of their most flourishing *cafetals*, or coffee plantations, into sugar estates, and they are ready to proclaim, as the Americans of the Southern States did with respect to their cotton, that "Sugar is king." The demand for sugar has enormously risen since the late Civil War in the United States; and the yield of Cuba, only one tenth of the territory of which as I before said is under cultivation, would be almost unlimited if the labouring powers of the Island could but keep pace with the demand. The great object of the Cubans has therefore been for several years to procure a fresh supply of negroes, and to keep those they have. The value of the negroes has risen to such an extent that, while the price of an able-bodied African forty years ago rarely exceeded £50, it stood at £100 twenty years later; it now averages from £250 to £300, and even £400 per head. Cuban slave-owners set the collective value of their slaves at £700,000,000, a sum which persons fully acquainted

with the subject deem absurdly exaggerated, and reduce to about one-third. The supply of African slaves for Cuba, as for all other countries, ought to have been long ago at an end, as in 1815 Spain bound herself, as a member of the Congress of Vienna, to forbid the Slave Trade, and two years later accepted from England a bribe of £400,000, in consideration of which she engaged to put an end to it. Slaves from Africa however have continued and, to some extent, still continue to be imported into Cuba; till very recent times with the almost open consent of unscrupulous Captains-General, who shamelessly received hush money in the shape of a doubloon for every head of these black cattle; and now as I believe without the consent, connivance, or even knowledge of the Spanish Government, or of its officials here, but by an extensive smuggling, for which the numerous creeks and coves with which the Island is indented afford boundless opportunities. In this infamous trade not only Spaniards, but men of other countries, England itself and America not excepted, have always been and are deeply implicated. So long as Cuba has slaves, and calls for slaves, the negro cattle will always find their way to the Island. It is estimated that fully one-third of the slaves at present working on the sugar estates in the island are natives of Africa; while, had Spain been willing or able to fulfil her obligations, no African negro less than

fifty-eight years of age ought to be found in the plantations.

Should all this be allowed? Should there still be slaves and Slave Trade at so advanced a period of the 19th century? Clearly not. The right of ownership of man over man has long been declared unlawful and criminal, and no specious argument can stand against the almost unanimous outcry of the civilized world. The Cuban slaveholders, and the Cubans in general, have no particular horror of slavery. They maintain that the arrangement is equally advantageous to the labourer and his owner; that while the planter grows immensely rich, his slave is supremely happy; that he is well fed and provided for, and meets at the hands of his Spanish master a treatment unlike anything that was known either in the British West Indies or the Southern States of America. Witty travellers in Havannah have been amused by the sight of the "fat and shiny" look of the slaves, evidently well cared for, and have even asserted that, "as a rule, if at broad noonday you see a negro awake he is free; if asleep, he is a slave." On the other hand, other writers assert that "the average hours of labour of the slave in the plantations during crop time—that is, for five months in the year—is sixteen and eighteen hours a day, Sundays not excepted." They add that the average duration of an imported slave's life on a sugar estate does not exceed five years.

I purpose visiting some of the principal estates in the Island, and will do all in my power to test the truth of these conflicting statements. Meanwhile I may be allowed to assert that in the opinion not only of all Cubans, but of all foreigners here, the lot of the slaves is considered by no means hard, and that, were the destinies of the Island to be in its own hands, there would be every chance of slavery being perpetuated. There can be no doubt whatever that the condition of the Cuban slave is in every material respect better than that of the free cultivator of the plains of Lombardy, or even than that of many a labourer possessing a freehold cottage and garden in some parts of England with which I am thoroughly acquainted.

All this however is beside the purpose. The social and moral iniquity of slavery has been long universally denounced; and the only question is upon what principle the emancipation of the slaves can be most justly effected. The French Republicans of 1792 led the way in this work of justice and humanity, and the result was the loss of their possession in San Domingo, and the foundation of a Negro Republic or Empire, which has for many years been falling into all the horrors of African savagery, relapsing even, as I have been assured on good authority, into not unfrequent cases of cannibalism. England followed in the track of France with greater generosity and, as it was sup-

posed, with greater foresight. She paid the West Indian planters £20,000,000 as an indemnity for their slaves, and allowed these latter after a short probation unconditional freedom. The result of this policy was for a time the ruin of the English West India Islands; for the indemnity granted to the planter simply paid for the slaves on whom he was dependent for his labour, and allowed nothing for the estate, which, without those slaves or some substitute for them, necessarily became worthless. Those Islands, and especially beautiful Jamaica, were very sparsely inhabited and cultivated. The emancipated negro squatted upon the land and, by a little scratching of the ground, was able to supply his few wants, and to enjoy that idleness which is his happy instinct. In America, as now in Cuba, the slaveholder clung to his bondman while he often affected to stigmatize the bondage as wasteful as well as criminal; and slavery, which for a time threatened to sink the State vessel of the Union, only disappeared after a civil contest, the result of which was the ruin of the whites, but by no means the welfare of the blacks. I am told that both in Jamaica and in the Southern States the evil is finding its remedy, thanks to the competition of white and coolie labourers with the negroes; but on this point also I must beg to reserve my judgment. As to Cuba, although as I said all rational Cubans feel that the work must be done, they are considering how it

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may be done without bringing themselves to the condition of Jamaica, Carolina, or Louisiana; in other words, they are meditating on Mr. Carlyle's problem about "shooting Niagara and after."

I have said that few Cubans have any real horror of slavery. The institution naturally finds its strongest supporters among the planters themselves, and hardly less so among the merchants in Havannah and their correspondents in New York and London, to whom most of the Cuban estates, or their produce, are deeply mortgaged. The Cuban plantations and the labour of their slaves represent immense wealth. Were Cuba to undergo the fate of Jamaica, the consequences of the catastrophe would be felt in the counting-houses of European and American citizens, some of whom are loudest in denouncing the state of things by which they do not disdain to profit. It would also give the blacks in the interior of the Island an ascendancy which the whites in the towns would find it difficult to withstand. The bond of union between Spain and Cuba would almost inevitably be severed; for the strongest partisans of Spain in the Island have no other tie to the Mother Country than gratitude for her long protection of their slaveholding interests. The Peninsular Party, the immigrant Spanish population, would rapidly quit the Island; and the feeble Creole or native Cuban population

would soon find themselves at the mercy of the negroes, threatened with all the calamities which ravaged the neighbouring island of San Domingo in the days of Toussaint L'Ouverture. Thus would General Lersundi's prophecy come true, that "Cuba could only cease to be wholly Spanish to become wholly African." Swayed by such considerations, the planters and their friends are, I know not with what sincerity, putting forth schemes either for the gradual emancipation or for the immediate apprenticeship of their slaves. The negro should be declared free from this moment, and should actually be free at the end of ten years. This interval should by him be spent in his former master's or in some other master's service, on the terms of a contract somewhat analogous to that on which Chinese coolies are hired — bound, that is to say, to do a certain amount of work, and receiving wages for it, partly in kind, partly in money. At the end of ten years there should thus be no slaves in the Island; but the work would not be too rashly and disastrously discontinued; and the negroes would meantime have learned to appreciate the sacredness of labour and the sweetness of its wages.

Meetings with a view to propose and discuss similar schemes are being held here and there in the Island; and especially in the Casino Español, or Spanish Club of Havannah, wherein resides, as I have often told you, the real Sovereign power of the Island, and where

are the head-quarters of everything that is Conservative, Peninsular, Loyal or *Negrero*,—in other words, of all who uphold negro slavery in the country. That these meetings have hitherto led to no results one may well imagine. Nevertheless, there is some importance in the fact that subjects of this nature are even discussed in the Casino itself; there is a party who honestly and earnestly would advocate some compromise; but by far the more powerful party attend the meetings in spite of themselves. They can see no solution to the terrible problem, and they are only anxious to gain time to continue the present state of things as long as possible, and to pocket the produce of crop after crop till the deluge comes which is to put an end to their profits and to all their interest in the Island.

The native Cuban, Patriotic, Revolutionary, or Filibustering party hold a different language. They affect for slavery a disgust which they do not, perhaps, really feel; and most of them, having nothing to lose for themselves, find it easy to inveigh against the barbarity of the institution, and against the greed and avarice of the *Negreros*. The Insurgents care little for abolition, but they do not fail to make political capital of abolitionist sentiments, and they proclaim slavery to be the bane and the disgrace of their country. The Cuban Insurgents in fact are a mere handful of white men with a large following of

negroes, who consist mainly of free blacks, though their ranks are occasionally, but not to any great extent, swelled by fugitive slaves. These upon joining the Insurgents are immediately proclaimed Free; and have indeed as much freedom as their long-contracted servile habits enable them to enjoy. With the Cuban slaves however the cases of mutiny or desertion from their masters are extremely rare.

But, I may be asked, if slavery has such deep roots in Cuba, how is it that the Spanish Government hope to find it so easy to legislate for emancipation in Porto Rico? The answer is easy, and it throws sufficient light on the whole subject. The Island of Porto Rico has a surface of 3969 square miles, with a population of 615,574 souls. Its size is only about one-twelfth that of Cuba, while the population is nearly one-half. This amounts to saying that Porto Rico is wholly settled and cultivated. Its population consists of 323,032 whites and 292,542 negroes, about 30,000 only of whom are slaves. The island is divided into small estates, the owners of which cultivate them with the aid of a few labourers, by far the immense majority of whom are free men. To reduce the very few remaining slaves to the same condition will be extremely easy especially as there is hardly any waste land, or "provision ground," where the emancipated slave may squat and live in idleness, and the only alternative open to him will be to work or starve.

The conditions of Cuba are wholly different. Only one-tenth of the land here is under cultivation, and it chiefly consists of very large estates or plantations, which are called *Ingenios*, and to the production of which a very complicated system of labour and machinery and a vast amount of capital must contribute. Every imaginable contrivance of law and custom tends to make these estates inalienable and indivisible. As it happens in Lombardy with the large farms employed in the manufacture of Parmesan cheese, the Cuba plantations can only return their present profits under their present conditions. They must retain the same dimensions, rely upon the same labour and capital, or they must altogether cease to be, and some new system must be substituted. The Cuban planters cling, not to their slaves, but to their labour, for existence. They profess themselves willing, and even eager, to accept any measure of gradual emancipation which will not be ruinous both to the blacks and whites, but will allow of a transition from slavery to freedom peacefully carried out by the aid of all the resources of modern civilization. The problem to be solved is how to free 350,000 blacks, chiefly African savages, and yet maintain the material well-being obtained by a vast production of sugar and tobacco. Even as things are now, the Cuban planters begin to doubt, not without reason, whether their sugar, under the present weight of taxation, will long

resist the competition of beet-root in Europe, and of the cane-grown sugar of Asia, Africa and America under cheaper systems. If, they reason, the average of their estates can hardly under their present burdens compete successfully in the world's markets, what will be the case after the abolition of slavery in so sparsely-peopled a country before any other labour has been introduced? It is upon the strength of these considerations that the Cuban planters insist they are the best judges of what suits their own circumstances, and ought to be left to settle the question of slave and free labour upon their own terms. That they would soon find a solution of the arduous problem is indeed extremely doubtful; for, on the one hand, no imaginable kind of labour could be so cheap as that which is extorted from the slave—the cost of living of an able-bodied negro being reckoned at about £10 per annum; and, on the other hand, so long as the system, or indeed the mere name of slavery is maintained, every labourer in the Island, the so-called *emancipados*, the Chinese, and the whites themselves working in the same gang with the slave, are apt to sink into the same degradation. No Cuban going to the *Baracoon* to contract for the services of a Chinese coolie ever talks about “hiring;” he bluntly says he is *buying* a Chino. And the poor Chinaman, here the most unhappy of beings, seems indeed to bear the brand of slavery on his dejected brow.

How much longer the question may be adjourned I know not; and much less can I see by whom it is to be solved. Cuba is the land of trembling and misgiving. The people here are afraid of everybody and of themselves. They see difficulties and dangers besetting them on all sides, and they seem incapable of any resolution to grapple with them. Just at this moment it is the attitude of the Government of the United States that distresses them. The Americans are very actively fortifying Key West, near the extreme point of Florida, and they have just secured a footing in San Domingo at Samana Bay. The surmise is not that they for the present contemplate the annexation of the Antilles, which would hardly be a gain to them, but that they wish to obtain a footing on the coasts by the occupation of such points as may place in their hands the navigation of the seas, and especially of the canal of Bahama and the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico. If such indeed were their intentions, nothing could suit them better than the town and harbour of Havannah which is the very key of the gulf, and which could be easily fortified, garrisoned and isolated from the rest of the Island, and held with as great facility as Gibraltar is held by the English, or Ceuta by the Spaniards.

All these apprehensions however seem to me for the present groundless. No country in the world is more strongly interested in the continuance of the

present prosperity of Cuba than the United States. Of the yearly crop of sugar produced by this Island, and in some years, as I have said, realizing the enormous sum of £15,000,000 to £20,000,000, nearly seventy-five per cent. is bought by the United States, about fifteen per cent. by Great Britain. The remainder goes to other countries of Europe and South America, and less than two per cent. to Spain. The production of sugar in Cuba has been greatly stimulated by the wants of the United States, especially since the Civil War there; and the Americans must needs hesitate before they too openly or too violently interfere with a state of things in Cuba which affords them the readiest supply to their demands. It is for them to see whether it will suit them to kill the goose that lays such golden eggs.

## CHAPTER V.

### CUBAN SLAVE-OWNERS.

Country Excursions—Sugar Estates—Slave-Owners—Zulueta—Poey—Slave-Owners' Views—Slave-Owners' Schemes—Slave and Free Labour—Cuba and Spain—Cuba and America.

I HAD brought with me a large bundle of letters of introduction, and, upon first landing in Havannah, I hired a messenger by whose aid I sent them, with my card and compliments, to their destination. It happened with them as with the seed in the parable; some fell upon stony places, some by the wayside, and some among thorns; but a few fell into good ground and in due time brought forth fruit. Among those who took notice of the stranger who, as a friend's friend claimed their hospitality, were two of the wealthiest land and slave-owners, Don Julian De Zulueta and Don Juan Poey, the men who are universally acknowledged to have raised the cultivation of sugar to

the greatest perfection, and to have turned it to the utmost advantage for themselves and for their country. These gentlemen did not call upon me in person, but sent their ambassadors, in the shape of some junior partners, or upper clerks in their counting-houses, with many apologies for their inevitable absence, the most liberal tender of their services, and an especial invitation to visit their country estates. I did not suffer many days to pass before I availed myself of their kind offers, and, according to the Spanish phrase, went to the "houses which from the moment I honoured them with my presence became my own."

The traveler who wishes to be on good terms with Cuba should make his best haste to get out of Havannah. The smells and noises of that pestilential town had nearly killed me. The quiet and fragrance of the country revived me. I left Havannah, with a friend on a Monday, the 3rd of March, and crossing the bay to Regla went by the direct Eastern Railway Line to Matanzas—a distance of about forty-three miles. On the following morning we took the train to Bemba and Perico, thirty-seven miles further, and at the last-named station we met Don Julian de Zulueta who was waiting for us with two volantes. He bade me get into one with him and, as a volante can not accommodate more than two persons, pointed to the other as the conveyance of my friend. A drive of less than an hour brought us to the *Batey*—the central

establishment of the *Ingenio*, or sugar estate of España. On one side of the vast quadrangle constituting the *Batey*, and flanked by the crushing and boiling-house, the refining-house, the negro quarters, school, hospital, etc., was the master's dwelling-house; at the door of which the volantes pulled up; and where on alighting a very large tumbler of *bul*, or bowl, a refreshing beverage of which beer and lemonade are the main ingredients, was handed to us.

The country we had crossed is not destitute of beauty though denuded of trees; as it generally is throughout the island; for even what is called *monte* or forest, consists chiefly of very dense but low brush-wood. As we advanced from Havannah to Matanzas however, the eye was relieved by the sight of wooded hilly ridges gradually rising till they reach the Pan de Matanzas, a conspicuous object, as seen from the sea, to those who come from the north or east to Havannah, but which attains a height of little more than 1200 feet. Matanzas is a place of great beauty. It is situated, like Havannah, at the entrance of a bay—a larger bay—and at the meeting of two rivers, the Yumurri and the San Juan, the two valleys of which, studded with country houses to the hill-tops, form a charming background to the city. Not a little loveliness also characterises the scenery along the

road from Matanzas to Bemba, but, beyond this, and as I afterwards found out, all the way to the south coast as far as Cienfuegos, to the north as far as Sagua and Cardenas, and to the east as far as and beyond Villa Clara, the hills are everywhere lost to sight; and the country becomes a flat, here and there cut up into sugar estates, but a vast part of it still covered with the native forest and unreclaimed savannah. Of large timber there is nothing to be seen save the ubiquitous and monotonous Royal Palm, and here and there a *Ceiba* or cotton-tree, seemingly forgotten in the general destruction, all decayed with age, and at this time of year stripped of its foliage, looking dry and hoary as a spectre tree. Not many birds in sight; hardly any warbler's note—only everywhere the 'jack crow,' or Turkey buzzard, a foul and unwieldy vulture lazily flapping its wings and clinging to the earth to which the scent of carrion attracts it.

The journey from Havannah to Las Cañas, the great *Finca*, or sugar plantation of Don Juan Poey, is reached by another and a somewhat more round-about route. We left the capital by the South-Western Line at the Villanueva Station, and travelled by rail over Guines, to a station called Union, sixty-three miles off. Hence the *volante*, or *quitrin*, conveyed us to Don Juan's estate, over a sandy and stony road, or track, in two hours. The roads are everywhere detestable, and the

country not interesting. You have either the low forest, or the bare pasture, or the endless cane-fields to the right and left of you; everything is flat; and out of the vast level only the tall chimneys of the steam-engine at the *Batey* in the centre of the plantations enliven the landscape. These *Bateys*, with their various buildings, are all on one model; though some of them are on a larger scale, and in better order than others. The Cubans, like the Spaniards and other Latin races, have no love for the country. They have at their plantations only a *pied-à-terre*; plain and common-place houses, all on one and the same plan, with the scantiest apology for a garden round them. They are not intended for permanent residences, but only for the accommodation of the master on his occasional inspection of his property. All the utilitarian landowner thinks of is sugar, and he grudges half a rood of land for mere cool shade or pleasure-ground. I have seen several of Señor Zulueta's houses, which are among the most comfortable, but are no exception to the rule. But Don Juan Poey's possesses a library and a large collection of good books; and he took us across his two-acre garden, where, among other botanic wonders, he showed us as many as twenty-six different species of orange-trees.

I must not be expected to enter into any discussion respecting the merits of the various mechanical and

chemical contrivances which fully justify the name of *Ingenio*, by which the Cubans invariably designate both a sugar house and a sugar estate. My object in going through these establishments was merely the solution of the great social problem—how free labour may be here substituted for the present slave system, without materially affecting the production of these estates, and consequently without causing even the temporary ruin of the Island. I allowed myself to be led about from one building of the batey to the other, examined crushing-machines, steam-engines, vats, vacuum pans, centrifugals, and the like; but kept steadily to my subject, and found in my host the utmost readiness to enlighten me about it.

The slave-owners in Cuba are convinced of the necessity of manumitting their slaves; but readily as they acknowledge the evils of the slave system, they are not persuaded of the wisdom of any measure by which it may be brought to an end. The case they make out for themselves is by no means weak. They found in the Island a system of cultivation thoroughly sanctioned and even encouraged by the laws of their country for more than three centuries, the results of which were, on the whole, beneficial both to the landowner and to the labourer; and they so far improved upon the primitive system by the means of machinery as very greatly to lighten the labourer's toil, at the same time that they heightened

and extended the productiveness of their estates. They are compelled now to give in to the philanthropic spirit of the age; but they wish to do so in some manner less injurious to themselves, and less fatal to the helpless beings whom so many years of slavery have unfitted for self-dependence than by sudden abolition. The slaves in the estates I have visited are hard worked; at least, at this season; and I have heard the cane-crushing machine grinding and groaning till two or three o'clock after midnight. Still their lot is far less miserable than is generally imagined. The production of sugar consists of two very distinct proceedings. There is the field work—the cultivation of the cane which can be and is actually done to a great extent by free labour, as in many instances by white men, and which may eventually be altogether made over to them; and secondly there is the work in the sugar-house, which crushes the cane and turns its juice into sugar; and that is done in a very great measure by machinery, a very complicate and ingenious machinery, which daily receives new improvements, and which leaves men little more to do than to watch and guide it. It is the pride of such slave-owners as Zulueta and Poey that they have ransacked all the industrial marts of Europe and America to make iron, coal, charcoal and steam do the work which was formerly done by slaves; reducing the number of their “hands” by hundreds and thousands,

and leaving for the remaining ones a task by no means heavier than that of the operatives of Manchester, Sheffield or Newcastle. Señor Zulueta, in his estate *España*, which he values at \$1,500,000 (£300,000), only employs 500 manual and skilled labourers, both in the field and the sugar-house. The greatest hardship, so far as I could see, consists in the atmosphere of some parts of the sugar-house, where the heat is intense, though by no means so fierce as in certain departments of English iron-works.

What aggravates the hardships of the sugar cultivation is the nature of this tropical climate, and it is this which gives the negro—a very salamander in the heat—his superiority over all other labourers. The negro is generally a lazy and indolent creature; but under any proper stimulus—the greed of gain as well as the dread of the lash—he warms up, as it were, in his exertions, and grapples with his work as if with a deadly foe, exulting in his great physical strength and delighting in his strenuous achievement. Hard work seems to come to him by inspiration. I have seen the negroes—men, women and children—equally revelling in the toil before them, whether they were cutting the cane in a plantation under the threat of the overseer's whip, or whether they were coaling the steamer in St. Thomas' harbour with the prospect of

5s. daily wages. The difficulty lies not in getting the negro to work hard but in keeping him to his task. He is an irrational, improvident being ; a very child, not amenable to the idea of any but immediate want, incapable of giving a thought to the morrow. In the Cuban plantations it is not so much the lash as the vague terror of it, and still more sheer habit, that keep him steadily to his occupation. I have seen negroes, and even negro women, in chains in an estate near the station of Agüica, and have visited another plantation near Cienfuegos, belonging not to a Cuban, but to a free and enlightened American citizen, where the principle of cellular or solitary imprisonment is adopted to bring refractory slaves to reason. But on the estates of Señors Zulueta and Poey, as well as I believe in many others, no coercive means seem actually to be needed. The labourers are fat and sleek and shiny like black slugs, and, at certain hours, noisily merry ; their broad grin contrasting with the dull and sullen look of the Chinaman who is "contracted" or "indentured" to the owner, and whom the law nominally exempts from corporal punishment. The negro in a state of slavery is as efficient and willing a labourer as the master can desire. I have seen crowds of them clustering round Señor Zulueta, on their knees, joyously crying, "*El Amo! El Amo!*" as if the master were a demigod to them and his presence among them an angel's visit, descanting on the extra

work they had voluntarily accomplished, and soliciting a reward; grinning all the time they were doing obeisance, pocketing the bounty that was handed to them, as if it were their due, and going off in great glee without a word of thanks or a mark of respect to the donor. And yet far above the overseer's whip, the mere flash of that master's eye, the mere ring of his voice, strike awe and submission into the whole establishment, and seem to set the very engines to work in double-quick time. We have here moral influence and discipline at work. A man of Zulueta's temper rules his sugar-house pretty much as a general of the Wellington school would lead an Anglo-Irish army, by expecting every man to do his duty. And I can understand him when he says he would willingly give 10,000 dollars a year, instead of 2000, to a good *Administrador*, manager or steward of one of his estates, but that such a man as he wants is not to be had at any price. As well could Napoleon have expected Austerlitz or Wagram to be won by one of his marshals. Don Julian de Zulueta is a born king of men. He is, by his own account, a *Hijo de Labrador* (labourer's son), from Alava, in the Basque Provinces; he came to this Island without a farthing, without education, and he remembers the time when the height of his ambition was to scrape together a sum of 25,000 dollars with which to go back a rich man to his native village. And now the estate *España*,

in which he entered with me into all these particulars, is worth 1,500,000 dollars; and he has three others of equal value—all of which I have seen—*Alava*, *Billaya* and *Havannah*, adjoining one another, and connected by a private railway of his own devising. He is daily purchasing and enlarging new ones; he has a large mercantile establishment in town; and he has a hand in almost every industrial and commercial speculation in his own country or out of it, carrying on an immense amount of work, not so much, perhaps, for the great wealth it brings him, as for the absorbing pleasure he finds in the work itself. So indefatigable a labourer is well fitted by nature to set labourers their task. But it is not merely in his private capacity that Zulueta has made himself remarkable. He is the heart and soul of every public institution, political or social, in Havannah. He is president of the *Casino Español*, that *Imperium in imperio*, which as I have often said rules the Island in the interest of the Peninsular and slave-holding party, and holds the 60,000 or 70,000 armed volunteers under control. In the City Corporation, in the Chamber of Commerce, the Exchange, the Bank, the Hospitals and all other establishments, the will of Don Julian de Zulueta is supreme; and in great emergencies the Captain-General would as little venture upon any measure without consulting him, as the *Priori* of the Republic of Florence would have dreamt of issuing a decree without the sanction of the Elder Cosmo de

Medici. Zulueta, an illiterate man in youth, has given himself all the education his ruling position required. He both speaks and writes his own language, not only with perfect correctness but with a certain stout eloquence; and his extensive journeys have made him acquainted with the languages as well as with the civilization of other countries.


Differing from him in many respects, but equally striking in mind and character, is Don Juan Poey. He is the son of a Frenchman and of a Cuban lady, and by right of his mother calls himself a "Creole," and evinces the greatest interest in the welfare of the Island, apart from its connection with Spain. He is a little slight man, above 70, with an intensely French countenance, beaming with something of the liveliness and intelligence of the late President of the French Republic. A man of extensive scientific acquirements, he converses most agreeably on almost all subjects. If Zulueta is 'by nature a rough sort of king, Poey seems intended for a very consummate statesman and diplomatist. In the opinion of all men Don Juan Poey is the one who best understands the real position of affairs in this country, and who has always the keenest insight into the intricacy of the grave questions which await a speedy solution. Zulueta rules by strength of will, but Poey leans to circumstances, which he acknowledges to be stronger than any man's will.

Zulueta only asks how long it may still be possible to fight on; Poey considers how soon and with what good grace it may be advisable to give in. Zulueta has all the sanguineness of a man who has known no failure; Poey is, or calls himself, by instinct a croaker, and can see no issue out of present evil except in evils incommensurably greater.

Both these gentlemen have signed their names to a manifesto which has lately been put forth in the name of the Cuban slave-owners. Judging from its tone, it is evidently intended as an *ultimatum*. It is addressed to the whole world, but published as a Report to the Proprietors and Slave-owners (*Hacendados y Dueños de Esclavos*) of the Island of Cuba, and bears the names of the members of a Special Committee (*Junta Delegada*) elected at a meeting held on the 11th of July, 1870, with the sanction of the Captain-General, and appointed to consider the question of slavery and free labour. The Report was drawn up by Señor Zulueta as chairman of the committee, and first read in the *Casino Español* over which he also presides.

Don Julian de Zulueta, his colleagues in the Committee, and all the members of the Association are aware that the cause of slavery is lost; that the system has become indefensible, and that its downfall is only a question of time. They have, they say, never pretended to perpetuate slavery in its present condition;

and they are now more than ever prepared to proceed to its modification, as the Spanish Government has deemed it expedient to decree the immediate abolition of slavery in the island of Porto Rico. Immediate abolition, even if practicable in Porto Rico, where the slaves do not exceed the number of 30,000, in the midst of a free population of more than 600,000, would be utter ruin to Cuba, which possesses more than 300,000 slaves, estimated at a value of 300,000, 000 dollars, or about £60,000,000. The Cuban proprietors and slave-owners profess to be actuated, not by personal interests but by considerations of patriotism. Thanks to their intelligence, industry and energy, they say, this western part of the Island has been in a few years raised to a state of prosperity unexampled in the West Indies ; a flourishing condition which enables it to export produce to the amount of 100,000,000 dollars, or about £20,000,000 a year, notwithstanding the cruel Civil War which since 1868 has been ravaging the two other departments of the Island, reducing the production there absolutely to nothing. The Cuban proprietors and slave-owners cannot consent to any measure likely either to destroy or even to imperil their present well-being. They would oppose any such measure for their own sake, for that of their negro slaves, for that of their country, and for that of the world ; for the sudden collapse of an industry which supplies mankind with one-fifth of its



sugar would not fail to affect even the remotest regions. The immediate abolition of slavery, they think and not unreasonably, would have the effect of throwing out of employment and leaving to their own devices an enormous mass of slaves, indolent by temperament, placed above all want by their habits and by the nature of the country, who could never be made to acknowledge God's law which "bids man work that he may live," and never be made to abide in settled homes or to show any regard for family ties. The immediate emancipation of the negroes would soon bring back the whole black race to the instincts of its native African savagery; the worst horrors which afflicted San Domingo and which threatened Jamaica and the Southern States of the American Union would be reproduced in this Island, where they would be aggravated by the evils inflicted by the Insurrection—a movement which already, in a great measure, relies on negro sympathies, and reckons many negroes among its most determined and efficient combatants. It is therefore necessary in the opinion of Don Julian de Zulueta and his associates, so to proceed towards abolition as not to interfere with production—to provide for the elimination of slavery by the substitution of free labour; and, with that view, all the proprietors and slave-owners are invited to tax themselves yearly to the amount of 10 dollars, or £2, for each of the slaves now in their possession, so as to constitute a

fund of 3,000,000, dollars or £600,000, to be annually devoted to the importation of free labour from Europe, India, China, Egypt and all other regions of both hemispheres. The presence and the gradual introduction of these free labourers in the plantations, the high wages, the settled life and the well-being they would enjoy, would it is reckoned rouse the emulation and stimulate the energy of the indolent negroes ; and at the same time these would, by stringent and provident laws against vagrancy and their habits of petty thieving and squatting, be prevented from becoming an incumbrance and a nuisance in the island. It is thus expected that in a few years the whole nature and system of labour in the sugar and tobacco estates would be completely transformed, that slavery would disappear, and that production, far from falling off in the Western Department where it now gives such splendid results, would be easily extended to the centre and east of the Island, so as to raise the population of Cuba to 8,000,000 or 10,000,000.

I have so far in a few words endeavoured to sum up the leading points of this scheme, into the particulars of which I deem it for the present unnecessary to enter. The first reflection occurring to one upon reading the Report is that, if the Cuban slaveholders were really in earnest about this enterprise, and if they could succeed in carrying it into effect, they must be

either infinitely more clever or signally more fortunate than any of the States or Associations which have previously considered the question of slave emancipation. They would achieve in Cuba what neither France in San Domingo nor England in Jamaica, neither America in the Southern States nor Spain in any of her other possessions, has as yet been able to accomplish. Nowhere hitherto has slavery ever been abolished and free labour organized in its stead without seriously damaging production and more or less disturbing or imperilling social order. There seems to be an original sin in slavery which must needs bring its own penalty. The Cuban slave-owner is apt to become very eloquent when he descants on the "liberal and truly patriarchal" treatment of his slave. But that treatment, however mild and humane, only fitted the slave for a state of bondage; it released him from all responsibility; it impressed him with no sense of duty. No greater harshness was resorted to than was necessary to break him to the yoke, as one would break a horse or bullock. But it assumed the slave to be a dumb animal, and so left him. If upon his sudden emancipation he fails to act as a rational being, his master alone is to blame. The slave-owner has thus raised the real obstacle to the settlement of the question of emancipation; he has not prepared his slave for it.

All in this direction remains to be done. The

slave, according to the proposed plan, has to be redeemed and reformed by contact with free labour, by its example, and by competition with it. The Cuban slave-owners are, as they say, willing and even anxious to introduce free labour and ready to pay handsomely for it. But, in the first place, their ideas as to where free labour is to come from are somewhat vague. There are now some instances of free labour in the Island. There are small estates in which the sugar cane is cultivated by white men, chiefly Spaniards, and whence the crop when cut is sold to the owners of great *ingenios*, or sugar manufactories, there to be boiled and turned into sugar. There are also a very few instances—I only know of one—in which sugar is produced and the whole process gone through, and where yet only free white men are employed. But any considerable emigration from Spain or from any other Southern European country cannot be confidently relied upon as the tide of Spanish emigration is steadily setting towards Buenos Ayres and other regions of the Plate, where they have less to fear from fever and cholera, which make the West Indian climate a terror to the white man. Add to this—though it is a consideration only concerning the morrow—that even if the white emigrant himself can work, there is absolutely no work to be looked for from his offspring of the second or third generation.

We have then the Chinese and other Asiatics. Cuba has been importing Chinese for the last 10 or 12 years, hitherto with no good results. Nothing has been effectually done, and little even attempted, to make sure that the enlistment of the China coolie at the starting is voluntary; nothing to mitigate the "horrors of the Middle Passage" on the voyage; nothing to guarantee the terms of the contract by which, on his arrival, he is apprenticed or bound to his employer. The Chinaman, thus left to the planter's discretion, has become to all intents and purposes a slave; and as his superior intelligence and higher temper revolted against the treatment to which the negro cheerfully submitted, the bond between the Cuban slave-owner and his Asiatic labourer is not unfrequently broken by violence; the Chinaman, when stirred by vindictive passions, being indifferently ready for murder or suicide. The parties are thus not a little dissatisfied with each other. The slave-owner finds the Chinese coolie unmanageable on his estate; and the coolie, so soon as he can free himself, turns his back upon the plantation, and betakes himself to that town-life to which his skill in a variety of handicrafts eminently fits him. The Island of Cuba has, in consequence of these first experiments, got into disrepute with the Chinese; and as these are now in great demand in the French and British colonies, in the United States and elsewhere, it can hardly be ex-

pected that they will give their preference to the Cuban slave-owners unless these hold out irresistible inducements. After all, this great contest between Slave and Free Labour reduces itself to a question of wages. The Cuban slave-owners take upon themselves all the credit of the marvellous well-being which the Western Department of the Island has attained. They have done it, they say, by their "intelligence, industry and energy." But it has been, as they must allow, partly also the result of the circumstance that they had slaves and slave-trade when their neighbours had to depend on free labour. The mere fact that Cuba produced only 50,000 tons of sugar in 1820 and 800,000 tons in 1868 ought to be decisive as to the causes by which mere "intelligence, industry and energy" in this Island have been assisted. What has been death to Jamaica or South Carolina has been life and prosperity to Cuba. Cuba, we are now told, will compete with her neighbours with equal weapons—she will come in as a fair customer in the free-labour market. Her appearance in that new character will be a matter of congratulation to all men. Only, be it remembered, so long as Cuba has slaves, the free labourer will always shun her as a plague-spot. The Cuban slave-owner will, in all cases, have to pay a trifle above the ordinary price, even if he finds it possible to buy on any terms.

Not a little has been said about the wasteful and

inefficient nature of slave-labour ; and there are even here in Cuba, men who undertake to establish plantations on the strictest free-labour principles, and to make them answer as well as and even better than the estates which are now cultivated by slaves. But for the slave-owner there is "nothing like the slave." His able-bodied negroes, which in 1820 cost him about £50 a head, have now risen in price to £300 and even £400. But when he has bought them they are his, not for five or ten years, but for their lifetime, and their children and grandchildren are also his and his heirs for ever. How he feeds and treats them, how much he gets out of them, is his own concern alone. The free labourer may work, or he may not. What if he will not? The slave-owner knows how an unwilling slave is made to work ; but he cannot be brought to consider wages as efficient a means of coercion as the lash, or the mere fear of the lash. Just at this moment the pranks and vagaries of free labour in old Europe yield no little weight to the slave-owner's argument against it. "Look at your mine and factory workmen," he says. "What have you gained by haggling with them about short hours and high wages? The men throughout England have worked less, drunk more, and so far from attaining independence are sinking under want of discipline ; and by strike after strike are working out both their own ruin and that of their country's industrial and commercial greatness."

It will be easily understood that men who talk in this strain can be only half-hearted in any scheme tending to abolish slavery by the substitution of free labour. The Cuban slave-owners are apt to think of Cuba as if there had never been any other slave-holding country in the world. They take no little pride in their own magnanimity in consenting to take the question of Abolition into consideration, as if no other community had ever gone through the arduous and more or less ruinous experiment before. All these clever devices about gradual emancipation, about a cautious substitution of free labour, have been for many years put forward and discussed in the United States; and we know with what results. The slave-owner declares himself ready for self-execution, but he will never find the tree on which he really means to hang himself. To do away with slavery it has everywhere been necessary to begin by liberating the slave; and this has been found safely practicable, and then but to a certain extent only in small communities, as in Barbadoes or Martinico where the whole country was cultivated, and where the negro, finding no spot where he could squat and indulge his idle habits, has been compelled by sheer starvation to come to terms with his former or with some other master. In no country in the world are circumstances more favourable to negro squatting than in this Island; and those who assert that the negro slave in Cuba is too igno-

rant of any field or garden work besides the cultivation of the sugar-cane to squat, are either deceiving themselves or bent on deceiving others. The real truth is, that in the whole scheme proposed by Zulueta and his associates there is a vast amount of delusion. The abolition of slavery must needs have in this Island some of the fatal consequences it has had everywhere. It must, at least temporarily, interfere with production ; it must lead the country through a period of transition, out of which no one can say what new and unforeseen state of things may arise. At all events, a beginning can only be made by a general and more or less sudden and violent emancipation.

To the Cuban slave-owner however the great object is to gain time ; and the plan now laid out in the Zulueta Manifesto is, to my mind, only contrived to put off the evil day. Before the Association is formed and constituted and the owners of the 300,000 slaves have given in their adhesion to its views, before the funds to be subscribed by them are collected and the world has been searched through to procure free immigrants, years may elapse and many things may come to pass. In the meantime crop after crop is gathered in, and million after million finds its way into the slave-owner's pocket ; and when the "deluge" comes, as come it must, it will find the slave-owner

prepared to meet its disasters with what the Italians call "*pazienza per forza*." Besides, if the Cuban slave-owners are unwilling to manumit their slaves, they imagine that there is no Power in the world to make them. I need not tell you how unsteady and utterly helpless the Madrid Government is in Spain itself. But in Cuba there is not, and there has not been for four years, any Spanish Government. The *Casino Español* in Havannah, and the head-quarters of the Insurgents, wherever they may be, are the only real powers in the Island. Don Julian de Zulueta and his fellow slave-owners have sufficient influence in Madrid and throughout the Peninsula to enlist all the Conservative and many of the so-called Liberal elements in their cause. The Spanish Government will never have the means to enforce its decrees of emancipation in Cuba, and perhaps not even in Porto Rico. Many people in England attach great importance to the threatening attitude of the United States. But in this matter the policy of the Cabinet at Washington is as wayward and irresolute as that of the Madrid Government itself. The Cuban slave-owners feel confident that America has neither the inclination nor the power to carry the matter to the extremity of open hostilities, and they are sufficiently infatuated to believe that, even if she ventured to declare war, she would be no match either for the Spanish Government or for themselves single-handed. They fancy that America

is at this moment utterly destitute of both land and sea forces, as well as of all financial resources; and they flatter themselves that by chartering a few privateers—"half a score of Alabamas," as they say—they could so cripple her maritime power as to blockade her within her own ports, and soon bring her to sue for peace. As to any expedition against the Island, the people here are convinced that El Morro, Cabaña, and the other strongholds about Havannah, make the place as unconquerable as Portsmouth or Cherbourg.

Apart from these vain-glorious illusions however, it seems difficult to see, even if America could conquer Cuba by merely lifting up her little finger, what she would do with it. She is strongly fortifying Key West, off the extreme point of Florida; she has allowed an American company to purchase a long lease of Samana Bay, on the coast of San Domingo; and she is bullying Spain and Cuba about matters which do not directly concern her. But the question arises—What is it that America really covets? Does she aspire to the possession of the whole of the two great Antilles, San Domingo and Cuba, or, as some assert, even of the whole of the West Indies?—or will she, for the present, be satisfied with some important point like Samana Bay? If she requires any place in the Island of Cuba it can only be Havannah, for it is only with the latter and Key West that she could

command the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico. But to take Havannah is virtually to take Cuba; and, even if America could easily overcome all resistance and establish herself in this place, she would have to be at the trouble of fortifying and garrisoning it, so as to maintain it against all the forces of the Island. By taking Havannah, America would decapitate Cuba; or, in other words, she would utterly destroy not only the prosperity of the Island but also the very considerable trade which Cuba is now carrying on with the States. There can be no halfway, no gradual American annexation of Cuba. It would have to be achieved at once by the thorough subjugation of the Island, and it would involve the responsibility of pacifying and governing it. America would find here two irreconcilable parties, the native Cubans and the Peninsular immigrants—Creoles and Spaniards—and she could have no choice between them, because the Spaniards would not and could not come to any compromise with her. She would have to back the weaker party against the stronger and wealthier; and she could only overcome the resistance which the Spaniards would not fail to offer by breaking up their plantations and letting their 300,000 slaves at once loose upon the Island. The American annexation of Cuba would thus only hasten that “cataclysm” which is daily becoming more inevitable; and it would bring into her power an exhausted country with a population unfitted

for self-government and yet by no means inclined to acquiesce in her rule ; for the Creoles want " Cuba for the Cubans ; " and, although they would gladly avail themselves of the Americans to drive out the Spaniards, they would also be on the look-out for any chance of ridding themselves of the Americans.

A conquest of Cuba does not seem to me to enter into the usual system of American annexation. The American Government never leads, but follows, its people in any scheme of aggrandizement. It was not by armies, but by swarms of adventurers, pioneers, and squatters that the way was paved for the occupation of California and Texas. A territory must be Americanized before it can become American, and many years must pass before Mexico itself can be so " lubricated," as to be safely swallowed and digested. With respect to Cuba, no progress in the way of Yankee colonization is as yet perceptible, and none is practicable. Even American merchants, traders and artisans do not to any extent thrive in Havannah. Cuba, in American hands, would by reason of its climate be at all times an unprofitable possession. Even the soldiers necessary to garrison the strong places would, if they were whites, and especially dram-drinking Yankees, perish here like flies ; and negro battalions organized after the fashion of native regiments in India could not safely be depended on. It is therefore a general conviction here that America

will not, at least for a long time to come, proceed to any overt act of hostility against Cuba. Her policy is simply, by worrying the Spanish Government—which, as she well knows, is here utterly powerless—so to aggravate the evils and hasten the disasters of the Island as to make her interference at some future period a matter of necessity for the Island itself, when she may be solicited to step in as a “saviour of society.” The two parties which now, with unequal forces, contend for supremacy in the Island will thus be left to settle their own differences, and especially the question of slavery, as they best can; and as, for the present, the Peninsular and slave-holding party is sure of a decided preponderance, Don Julian de Zulueta and his associates will continue to throw dust into the world’s eyes, and, by proposing and discussing schemes of gradual abolition which they well know are impracticable, maintain the slave system till it falls by some violent catastrophe involving the temporary ruin and desolation of the Island. Things here, in short, must grow much worse before they have any chance of bettering themselves.

## CHAPTER VI.

### EMANCIPATION.

Emancipation Schemes—The Moret Law—How observed—Condition of Slaves and Slave-owners—The Negroes—The Chinese—The Sale of Cuba.

THE shrewd and matter-of-fact, though often perverse, English dealer in ready-made clothes whose authority I have repeatedly quoted, whenever he is questioned on the subject of the emancipation of the Cuban slaves invariably answers, that it is already “an accomplished fact,” and that every negro in the island has been for several years “virtually free.” By long living and flourishing among Spaniards, my trusting friend has caught their trick of using and accepting words for deeds, and looking upon mere promise as actual performance. The liberation of the slaves has been, it is true, determined on paper; and the Moret Law is usually pointed out as a proof that the Spanish

Government, so far as the matter lay within their power, have in this respect acquitted themselves of their task, and paid the debt their country owed to modern civilization. The Progressists who came into power with Prim, Topeta and Serrano, upon the downfall of Queen Isabella's government, had long been solemnly pledged to abolish slavery throughout the Spanish dominions; and, after long hesitation, they produced a Bill which, had it ever become law, might have been received by reasonable men as a fulfilment of their engagement, and might have given the question of negro bondage the only solution that circumstances allowed. The law of 1870, which took its name from the then Minister for the Colonies, Señor Moret y Prendergast, late Minister for Spain at the Court of St. James, enacted in the first place, that every slave who had attained his 60th year in September, 1868, should from that very moment be declared free; and moreover it proclaimed the *vi-entre libero*, or, in other words, at once emancipated all the unborn offspring of slaves. It bound the proprietors to rear and bring up all children born on or after the date of the "glorious September Revolution," to keep them at their own expense up to their eighteenth year, and only to exact from them, in return for their maintenance, such work as they might be fit for up to that period of their lives; after which they should be allowed to do with themselves as they

pleased. Had the Moret Bill been acknowledged as law in the Colonies for which it was intended, as it was in the Mother Country, where it answered no other purpose than to throw dust into people's eyes, the result would have been that before the year 1885 there would have been no other slaves in Cuba than those of the present generation—a generation too long bowed under the yoke to have either aptitude or longing for freedom. Even of the slaves now in existence, the number would rapidly decrease as they advanced in life and attained that age of sixty when all the claims of their owners over them ceased and they became their own masters; so that before the above-mentioned date of 1885, slavery, curtailed at the two ends, infancy and decrepitude, would have dwindled down to such inconsiderable proportions as might enable the legislator to deal finally and summarily with it.

To obtain this result however, it was necessary first that the law should be promulgated and enforced in the Colonies; and nearly two years elapsed before the Volunteers would allow it even to appear as a mere historical document in the newspapers: secondly, that it should be honestly and faithfully applied; and as the application was left to the slave-owners themselves, they naturally gave it that interpretation which best suited their own interests. With respect to the

liberation of the sexagenarians, it was found that few of the slaves, and none of the native Africans, knew anything about their own age ; so that no man could be proved to be sixty so long as there was any work in him, and when any one had actually reached that stage of life in which he became utterly useless, and when, according to the old order of things, he would have remained a dead burden upon his master, this latter had only to appeal to the new decree to be rid of him, and to let him starve at the very gates of the plantation which had been a home to him from childhood.

Again : the clause which manumitted the unborn, had it ever been observed without any redeeming provision, would have laid an enormous and an unjust burden on the slave-owners, without really benefiting the future freed-men ; as, during eighteen years of their lives, the new-born children would grow up in a thoroughly slavish condition, and would be compelled to work by the same discipline as had compelled their fathers before them. The law did not designate upon whom the task of fitting the new generation for a free life, in other words, of educating them, should devolve ; and all that the negro of the future could learn was that the day would come in which he should only work when he liked. The only advantage that might be expected from a gradual emancipation was thus lost ; and, at the end of eighteen years, the whole mass of the slaves would be found in as hope-

less a state of ignorance and brutality as it now is. There would always be the same question to be dealt with : “ How to dismiss the 300,000 or 350,000 slaves from the sugar estates, and to turn them loose and wild upon the unsettled districts of the Island, without reproducing the worst calamities of San Domingo, Jamaica, and the Southern States of the American Union.” To redeem and reclaim the slaves is a task as difficult to accomplish before as after their emancipation.

The mere word “ liberty,” it is true, has already acted as a talisman among the blacks. I have seen the *Cria*, or negro nursery, in many of the estates, and it is touching to see with what pride the slave mother lifts up in her arms the little naked *picaninny* who is one day to become a free man. Only a few years ago Señor Poey reckoned that out of three pregnant women in his plantation barely one either brought her offspring to maturity or reared it, notwithstanding the immense trouble taken to encourage fertility by setting a reward on every child, and relieving the mother from toil, as well as allowing her all comforts and luxuries for several months before and after her delivery. It was all in vain ; the negro woman equally shrank from the pains and from the duties of maternity. She either contrived to have no children, or treated them as if she hated them. But all that is changed now, and the nursery is crowded to an extent, and tended with a care never known before

—though, in the case of really free negroes, and in countries where liberty has ceased to be merely prospective, family ties are as utterly disregarded, and infants as shockingly neglected, as they were in the worst days of bondage. To educate and discipline the negro, or even to find out to what extent he is capable of improvement, is a problem about which few persons have as yet troubled themselves in Cuba. Most people agree that emancipation is a necessity; but few consider that there must be a time in which the slaves will cease to be made to work before they are taught to work voluntarily, and that during that interval there is every possible danger that the slaves, the masters, and the whole country, may go to destruction.

The scheme upon which the slave-owners have hit in in order to tide over the catastrophe, which they admit to be inevitable, is, as I before stated, the immediate association of free with slave labour, and the gradual substitution of the one for the other. They propose, first, that the slaves should be contracted, indented, or apprenticed to their present masters for a certain number of years and upon a certain amount of wages; secondly, that a subscription should be opened to bring in a number of free labourers corresponding to the number of the present slaves, for it is expected that “no amount of remuneration can make two free labourers

do more than the work that is now obtained from one slave." But in the opinion of Don Juan Poey, who has given the utmost attention to these subjects, there is something appalling in the sacrifices to which the land and slave-owners will have to submit if they are at the same time to allow wages to the slave who is now working for his bare sustenance, and to bear the expense involved by the importation of free labourers and by their wages. These sacrifices are so heavy that the greatest number of those who are to bear them must, if we may rely on Señor Poey's authority, succumb to them. There are, he says, in round numbers, 1500 sugar estates in Cuba, of these about 1200 yield to their owners in "dry sugar;" that is, without taking molasses, etc., into account, only 4 per cent. on their capital. The remaining 300 give a return of 6 to 8½ per cent. on the capital; though the proprietors of one-half of these are so deeply indebted and mortgaged that they can scarcely be said to cultivate their estates for their own account. There remain therefore, only 150 estates whose revenue could enable their owners to bear the new burdens, and these alone would be expected to survive the contemplated reforms. It is needless to say that the income is larger in those estates upon which greater care and intelligence, and above all things, greater capital is bestowed—those which belong to men like Poey or Zulueta who have other sources of wealth besides

their plantations. So artificial and precarious is this wonderful prosperity of Cuba that it can only be kept up for a time on the present terms; that is, by working the slaves to the full extent of their power. The moment this high-pressure is removed a general collapse will necessarily ensue. The causes of the distress of a great number of Cuban proprietors, besides their own improvidence and want of skill, must be sought in the heavy and ill-assessed taxes imposed by the rapacity of the Spanish Government, and by the charges of the four years' Civil War which have been exclusively borne by the Colony.

But, admitting for a moment that the landowners could muster material means to manumit and allow wages to the present slaves, and to hire an equal number of free labourers, it seems difficult to see how the freedmen and the freemen could be made to work together. There have been for many years several thousand Africans known by the name of *Emancipados*, men who have been rescued by the Spanish Government from the slave-dealers' hands, or who have been taken from their masters upon the ground of excessive and outrageous ill-treatment, but who, although they were declared free, were "for their own sakes" apprenticed to some slave-owner's establishment on the terms of a free labourer's contract. But these and the Chinese, who are also "contracted," have been almost invariably reduced to the condition

of slaves ; with this difference ; that the African has readily acquiesced in his fate, while the Asiatic has either been at all times fretting against it, or has by fraud or violence broken from it. Unless we wish to see the free labourer everywhere lowered to the level of the slave, we must needs either raise the slave to the freeman's level, or dispense with him altogether. In other words, the negro, unless free at once, will be more than useless. So long as one slave exists, it is impossible to foresee how free labour may answer.

I have seen one sugar estate conducted upon free-labour principles, and there only Chinese are employed. There has been an incredible amount of ill-treatment of these poor Asiatics ; and the Government has acted with equally shameful dishonesty towards the labourers and their employers. The Chinese have been overreached in their contracts ; they have been reduced to a condition identical with that of the negroes ; they have resented the indignity of the lash ; they have sought revenge in fire and bloodshed, or have broken through their engagements by fraudulent devices to which the venal authorities have lent their connivance. Instances are known in which the same coolies have successively apprenticed themselves to eight or ten different masters and broken from them all, nothing being more difficult than to see through their artful disguises and to establish their identity. There is

therefore, a vast number of these Chinamen loose about the island. One of the proprietors whose estate I have visited, told me he has lost as many as 40 out of a gang of 70. These fugitives, provided with false certificates, are not unwilling to work on estates conducted upon strictly free principles; but licence must be given to them as much as liberty. They must be allowed to smoke opium, to gamble, to swindle one another, and to indulge in all kinds of gross and brutal habits. I asked the owner of one of the free estates how so many labourers in the prime of youth could live thus out of all the haunts of other men and manage to dispense with women. The cool and unconcerned answer was, "*Arreglan esto entre ellos; uno con otro.*" These Chinese work by the piece, and at the hours of the day that best suit them they are distributed into gangs under "captains" or overseers of their own race, who are answerable for their good behaviour; they bargain for their wages partly in coin, partly in kind, and have little patches of land allotted to them, where they cultivate their own vegetables the seeds of which are imported from their native empire. But, even with all these advantages, and when allowed their own way in every respect, the Chinese prove to be but slovenly and inefficient labourers. They have little bodily strength, and whatever they have they put forth with reluctance. Such men as China has till now sent constitute a weakly, vicious, rascally set.

They are cunning in trade and ingenious in a variety of handicrafts. They make especially capital cooks; but they prove very nearly useless in the field, and little permanent good can be expected from their immigration, unless the rural districts of China have a better race of men in reserve to follow this mere off-scouring of the cities.

After all, the question is not how free labour may be imported, but how slave-labour can be got rid of. The negro is by instinct an inoffensive, good-natured, submissive being. Left to himself, after emancipation he would be no worse a member of society than the lazy, merry Neapolitan *lazzarone*. He would do the work of a cart-horse for one day in the week, to lie idly on his back for the remaining six days. But it is very questionable whether he would long be allowed to pursue the even and contented tenour of his days. There would be no lack of agitators ready to turn him into a powerful instrument of evil. The Cuban Insurrection already musters thousands of fugitive negroes in its ranks, although there are no frequent instances of *Cimarrones*—i.e. runaway or refractory slaves—in well-regulated plantations. Away from temptation, the negro hardly ever casts one thought beyond the limits of the *fincá* or estate where he is *adscriptus glebæ*; but only let him be thrown upon his own resources, or let the din of

strife and revolution go past his hut, and he will follow any leader who points the way to mischief with all the credulity of a babe and with all the savagery of a fiend. The difficulties in the way of emancipation lie in the Insurrection, just as the real dangers of the Insurrection lie in any possible scheme of emancipation. The example of the Southern States of the American Union shows us how easy it is for the black man to pass from the condition of a slave to that of a master. In the States the negroes had no opportunity to rule by the sword, because the whites held the sword firmly in their hand; yet the blacks have managed to become formidable by their yote. But in Cuba there is a war to be fought out between two white races—the Peninsulars and the Creoles—a war in which the emancipated negro will be called to play a part, and in which, whatever may be his own instincts and inclinations, he is not unlikely to work mischief to both parties. It is the fate of San Domingo rather than that of any other colony which seems to be impending on Cuba. The Peninsulars, it is true, relying on the strength of their well-organized volunteers flatter themselves that they can in the worst emergency be beforehand with their foes by a wholesale extermination of the negroes. But, whatever the issue of a war of races may be, the utter ruin and desolation of the Island must be the immediate result.

Apart from such tragic contingencies, there seems to be little doubt that, whatever be the scheme of emancipation, this Island, like San Domingo and other West Indian colonies, must at no distant period become the home of the negro. No other race thrives and wears so well in the tropics. In Barbadoes, as Mr. Kingsley informs us, there were in 1676 70,000 whites and 80,000 blacks. In 1851 the whites had dwindled to 15,824, and the blacks had increased to 120,000. In St. Kitt's, the 7000 whites of 1761 had in 1826 been reduced to 1600. Montserrat boasted in 1648 1000 white families. In 1787 there remained only 1300 white individuals; in 1828, 315; in 1851, only 150. And all this rapid extinction of the white race occurred in British colonies where something like order was always maintained, and where emancipation was carried out without actual violence. It is true that the Spaniard and his descendant may become more easily acclimated to these hot and unhealthy regions than the Anglo-Saxon; and that in Cuba the whites still to some extent preponderate over the coloured races. But, on the other hand, the hold of Spain over her colonies is far less steady than that of Great Britain; and in this Island factions and disorders have been and are permanently in the way of the country's prosperity, and threaten it with ultimate ruin. There is nothing more hollow, nothing more artificial than the present wealth of Cuba, as it was in a great mea-

sure founded on a slave-trade which has come to an end, and rests on a slave-labour which is doomed. When the attractions of that wealth begin to fall off the immigration of white men will soon diminish and eventually cease. The Spaniard and his descendant can live, but hardly thrive in Cuba. They can work also, but not with much energy, and not to any great purpose. There can hardly ever be a stout, healthy, efficient rural population in this island unless Africa supplies it.

It is under the impression of the grave difficulties and dangers with which the main questions concerning Cuba are fraught that men of a desponding disposition—such as Don Juan Poey—have come to the conclusion that the only expedient is to be found in a sale of the Island. Sell Cuba? By all means! but how or to whom? It is not in the least clear who in this proposed bargain is to be the seller and who the purchaser. The United States made a strong bid for the Island years ago, but they would not now offer one cent for a possession which, when worth having at all, they will be sure to obtain for nothing. A proposal for the purchase of Cuba was, it is true, made to General Prim, in 1869; and it was for some time entertained by that wise statesman under circumstances which might have made the scheme practicable. But the proposal, be it understood, did not proceed directly

from the United States, nor was it intended to lead to their immediate benefit. The intention was to buy "Cuba for the Cubans;" and the money was, under some sort of guarantee, to be advanced by a Company of Speculators, who might assume the name of Sympathisers, and might expect to repay themselves at the expense of the emancipated Island. There is no reason why such a scheme may not again be worth the consideration of the same or of some other such company. Cuba in her present position is well able to redeem herself; and it is only by some efforts in that direction that she may hope to maintain her present position.

The development of Cuban independence can only go hand-in-hand with the abolition of negro slavery, and Cuba can best be bought by the purchase of her slaves. There are now, as I have said, about 1500 slave-owners in the country, and most if not all of them would be perfectly willing to manumit their slaves if they could do so without utter ruin to themselves, to their country, and to the slaves themselves by a sudden check being put upon production, and 300,000 or more negroes being thrown out of employment. The transition from slave to free labour imposes upon the slave-owner, first, the necessity of paying wages to his negro who is now working for him for bare sustenance at the cost of £10 a year—and secondly, the necessity of paying for more labour, as free men cannot be

expected to work sixteen and even eighteen hours a day, as slaves are at certain seasons made to do. There must be in this transaction either a very considerable rise in the master's expenses, or a corresponding falling off in his receipts. I have already stated that out of 1500 slave-owners only 150 are in a position to submit to and survive such sacrifices. The rest have been and are, especially since the war, so heavily crushed by taxes and so sorely crippled by debts and mortgages, as to find it absolutely impossible to bear any additional burdens. It is from these distressed proprietors that Cuba may be purchased. It is by coming to their rescue that a way might be found out of all difficulties. The Company who four years ago offered £15,000,000 for the Island need only advance to these well-meaning slave-owners money enough, and at a sufficiently reasonable rate of interest, to enable them to go through the ordeal to which the inevitable reform in their slave-holding establishments must needs expose them. What ruined these men, besides the weight of taxes and duties, was the necessity of applying for loans to the great proprietors and merchants in Havannah and the other cities, from whom money could only be obtained on the most exorbitant conditions. The 150 slave-owners who, as I said, are able to turn the produce of their plantations to good purposes, are as a general rule not merely land-owners on a very large scale, but they are also among

the chief merchants and bankers of Havannah and other cities, and have extensive commercial and industrial connections with every country in Europe and America. Most of them are Peninsulars, or Spanish immigrants; and they have been more successful than the Creoles partly on account of their superior energy, but especially in consequence of the favour and countenance they always received from the Government, which saw in them the readiest instruments for the subjugation and enslavement of the Island. These are the men of the *Casino Español*; the men who have the volunteers under control, and who, thereby overawe not only the people but also the Government; the men whom the Government must humour and blandish because it knows that it can only rely on their loyalty and allegiance so long as it does everything they approve, and leaves undone everything to which they object.

The first step towards the purchase of Cuba would therefore be the emancipation of the 1200 poor slave-owners from the financial tyranny of the 150 rich slave-owners. Were adequate means at hand, every proprietor in Cuba would hail with transport the reform which might rid the Island of the curse of slavery. Señor Zulueta, who is the richest of the rich, proposed to obtain that object by a subscription of ten dollars to be paid by every slave-owner for every slave in his

possession. Such a subscription, he thought, would produce a sum of 3,000,000 dollars, with which every part of the world should be ransacked to yield free labourers for Cuba. But Señor Zulueta must be aware that the immense majority of his fellow-proprietors have not the money to meet his demand of ten dollars; they have not, that is, wherewith to pay the free labourers whom he would import for their benefit, or wherewith to pay the slaves who would cease to be slaves and who, as apprentices, would also have to receive wages. Señor Zulueta doubtless reckoned that these poor proprietors would apply for the necessary cash to the rich ones; an application which would enable these latter, in the first place to lend on their own terms, and in the second to hold their poor brethren under the thumb, so as to impose upon them any political and social measure which they themselves, the wealthy ones, might deem expedient. By stepping into the place of the extortionate money-lenders—that is, by advancing the 3,000,000 dollars a year on reasonable conditions—the Company which four years since had £15,000,000 ready in hand for the purchase of Cuba, might completely reverse the position, place the poor proprietors on an independent footing, and enable these by sheer numbers to outweigh the rich ones, and to impose upon them any political or social measure that might seem good to themselves. By far the largest number of the

poorer proprietors are Cubans ; they are patriots, and at heart Insurgents. Rescued from the ruin which threatens them, and enabled gradually to restore their fortunes and at the same time to rid themselves of their slaves, they would assume towards the Spanish Government and the Peninsular party such an attitude as would either enforce the establishment of self-government on behalf of the Island or would rapidly lead to its absolute emancipation. It must once more be observed that the vaunted loyalty of the Peninsular party to the Home Government is grounded exclusively on selfish motives. They only care for Spain inasmuch as under her protection they are enabled, by fair means or foul, to make their own fortunes and maintain their own ascendancy in the Island. Should the smaller proprietors by the aid of the Company escape from their financial thralldom and gain political preponderance, the Peninsulars would have either to quit the country or to accommodate themselves to its new destinies. They or their children would have to become Cubans, and their ill-gotten property would be subjected to those laws of natural subdivision which would best conduce to the public good. A certain sum of money—probably much less than the £15,000,000 offered to Prim—would thus effect the emancipation of the negroes without any material check to production, and would accomplish a pacific revolution which, whether under the

high sovereignty of the Spanish Crown, or on the footing of absolute independence, would allow the Cubans to claim their country for themselves. I need scarcely add that, could such a scheme be carried into effect, Cuba would not only continue in the enjoyment of her present partial prosperity, but she would rapidly extend her population and cultivation to the disturbed and ravaged districts, and attain that rank among the civilized and thriving communities to which the fertility of her soil and the undeniable intelligence of her inhabitants entitle her.

Such are the results to which a two months' unwearied attention to the subject, and incessant intercourse with the persons most intimately acquainted with it, seem naturally to lead me. This appears to me the only plan on which the Island may be sold or emancipated or pacified without utterly destroying it. I have often said that, however keenly the Americans may covet the Island, they are at this moment neither able nor willing to purchase or to conquer it. I very much question whether Cuba could at any time become a desirable possession to them, for they have as yet done nothing towards colonizing and thus pacifically annexing it; and it is very doubtful whether they ever could make themselves at home in it. Cuba neither is nor ever can be a fit abode for the white man, least of all for the Anglo-Saxon—not any more than Jamaica, where the white population has, even

during these last ten years and in spite of its visible general improvement, dwindled from 15,000 to 13,000, while the negroes and coloured people have risen from 400,000 to 500,000. The Government of the United States could hardly, under present circumstances, propose to Congress the outlay which might be necessary for the purchase of Cuba; nor would Spanish pride ever stoop to barter the "Pearl of the Antilles" for mere gold; nor would any party in Cuba—the Peninsular even less than the Creole—consent to a bargain which would transfer them like cattle to a foreign race. The policy of the Americans towards Cuba is neither wise nor generous. They, or at least a portion of their Press, seem to have no other object than to perpetuate the agitation and to aggravate the misery of the Island. They seem to think the annexation of the country can best be prepared for by its utter ruin, and they never pause to consider of what use Cuba would be to them if it came into their hands a mere desert. They do not seem to perceive that the destruction of Cuba must necessarily involve serious losses to an important branch of their trade; while, if they consented and contributed to some plausible scheme for its pacification, not only would that trade increase, but they would find profitable employment for thousands of those negroes who constitute a difficulty, if not actually a danger, in their Southern States.

Meanwhile, whatever may become of this or of any other project for the emancipation of the Cuban slaves, and for the termination of the political and social disorders of the Island, one thing is certain, that no Spanish Government, and above all no Spanish Republican Government, will ever achieve success. If any circumstance could enhance the helplessness and the senselessness of the Madrid Government in its management of colonial affairs, and especially in its grappling with Cuban difficulties, it would be the egregious assurance with which that Government boasts of its ability and readiness to deal with such matters, and the unblushing effrontery with which it declares that those matters are "already settled." Spanish subjects abroad are daily congratulated by such of their friends as take Madrid telegrams *au pied de la lettre*, on their rulers having at last done what they have too long left undone. "So, then your Ministers have at last brought the Cuban Insurrection to its last legs!"—"Ha! the thin end of the wedge has been finally introduced into the slavery difficulty by promulgating abolition in Porto Rico;" and even, "How glad I am that the foul blot of slavery has actually been removed from the escutcheon of old Castile, and that there is now not one single slave left in the Spanish Antilles!" Readers of newspapers see similar items of news among the telegrams dated Madrid, and they jump to the conclusion that things must be as

they are described. But, alas ! things in Spain, even mathematical things, are not as they are in other countries. "Twice two" in Madrid make "five." A Spanish Government, no matter of what party, has faith in assertion however grossly absurd and palpably untrue. "Something of it will always stick : and there are men who will believe anything you tell them." Spanish rulers well know that they are not able to abolish Cuban slavery, or to put an end to Cuban Civil War. But it is creditable to them to assume that they can do it, that they intend to do it; and it is expedient to have it believed that they have actually done it.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PACIFICATION.

The Civil War—Its ravages—Its character—Its results—Religion and Morality in Cuba—Prospects—The Knot of the Question—Future Prospects.

WHAT a beautiful island is Cuba! How many regions must a man visit before he can see such splendid coasts as those by which I have lately been sailing? The people of Havannah are very proud of their bay; they consider it "the finest harbour in the world," and, certainly, no one would gainsay its maritime and geographical importance as the key to the Gulf of Mexico. But all along the southern coast at Cienfuegos, at Santiago, at Guantànamo, and on the northern coast at Matanzas, Nuevitas, Nipe, and other spots, some of them as yet uninhabited, there are better sea-inlets than even the vaunted Bay of Havannah. You enter them through long, narrow,

winding channels; you see the wide, smooth surface of the water spreading before you, and steam up with perfect security from rocks and shoals till you move along excellent quays and jetties, with the railway everywhere meeting you at the water's edge. Wherever you land, piles of hogsheads of sugar are ready for exportation—these hogsheads which they tell me yielded \$108,000,000 last year, and which bid fair to exceed even that sum at the present season. At every station as you travel inland, “king sugar” takes up all available space; and in the rear of the line on both sides you have the cane fields, and in the midst of them the smoke of the steam-engine, crushing, boiling, refining more sugar. Labour and industry are no friends of the picturesque; and vast tracts of the Island brought under cultivation are either dead level or slightly undulating ground. But here and there, especially on the southern and eastern coasts, nature has not been unmindful of beauty. The valleys which come down to Matanzas, the rugged mass of hills rearing their summits above Trinidad have enough to charm the eye; while the long ridge of the Sierra Maestra, sloping down to the coast, wild and lonely, may well challenge the admiration of a beholder familiar with the grandest scenery of the Mediterranean shores.

No little part of this region I have visited. I have

followed the lines of railways to their extreme limits, to Cienfuegos, Sagua, and Villaclara. I have struck across country from one line to another, either tumbling about over rugged roads in a *volante*, or scudding through forests and over savannahs on the fleet Spanish jennet, whose ambling or racking pace is as fast as it is easy, and seems to tire the horse as little as his rider. Then I have embarked at Cienfuegos on board the "Villaclara," one of those huge, towering, flat-bottom American river steamers which give you the idea of an old three-decker turned inside out, and sailed all along the coast, touching at Trinidad, Las Tunas, Santa Cruz, and Manzanillo, and then rounding Cape Cruz to Santiago. In the course of these wanderings I have had good opportunities to see men and things. The result of my observations may be thus summed up.

No country in the world was intended for a finer, richer, or happier abode of man than this "Pearl of the Antilles;" no country could better have withstood the ravages of a four-years' Civil War. Yet the results of that Civil War begin to tell, at least on the Central and Eastern departments of the Island where the beauty and fertility are more conspicuous. The port of Manzanillo, said the English consul to me, was visited yearly before the Insurrection by thirty to forty British vessels; since then their number has dwindled down to eight or ten. And the same tale may be

told of every harbour in the Island, Havannah alone, and perhaps Matanzas and Cardenas, excepted. Manzanillo, like Cienfuegos, is a comparatively new town. Its level territory, for a distance of ten to twelve leagues from the Sierra Maestra, was cut up into sugar estates, many of which have been burnt or abandoned while the others simply exist at the Insurgents' discretion. No man can venture half a league out of town at night; no man can travel even by day to Bayamo, a few leagues off, without an escort of at least sixty well-armed men. Yet the little seaport itself is considered safe from a *coup de main*, as it has been hastily surrounded with petty forts; it boasts a force of 400 volunteers, besides 200 *bomberos*, or firemen, all staunch in their loyalty; and it has besides, regular troops everywhere quartered in the environs. Every place in these districts, however insignificant, is thus virtually an encampment. At Santiago, where is the chief command of the Eastern Department, life and property are somewhat safer; yet the beautiful coffee plantations established there and at Guantànamo by French fugitives from the Negro Insurrection of Hayti at the close of the last century, have in a great measure disappeared; and what cultivation still survives depends for safety on the immediate protection of the troops—a protection precarious at the best of times, and in return for which the wants of the soldiers have to be supplied, and their comforts attended to: for it

is only by cheerfully submitting to be plundered by friends that the proprietor may hope to escape being pillaged by enemies. And even when no immediate danger arises from the approach of the Insurgents, the military authorities compel the planter either to maintain a large garrison at his own cost for his defence—the ordinary number is sixty men, volunteers or regulars—or else to remove all his movable property ; to gut and unroof his house, lest it should afford shelter and become a stronghold to the rebels. The prosperity of which Havannah and the Western Department of the Island show such splendid symptoms, contrasts very sadly with the distress and misery which meet the traveller as he proceeds eastwards. You see young towns like Cienfuegos, Manzanillo, Sagua and others, which only ten years ago were rising in importance and were laying out promenades, building theatres, concert halls, and casinos, and so ministering to the only luxuries of Spanish life, suddenly stunted in their growth, and, as it were, death-stricken. The population of Santiago has indeed increased, but merely by becoming the refuge of the landowners and of the rural population whom the Civil War has driven from their homes. At this rate, homestead after homestead, district after district, and eventually a large portion of the Island will be dying off, surely and not slowly ; and already the United States, the Spanish Republics of Central America, and the British colonies swarm with

Cuban fugitives. There is a "Little Cuba" in Jamaica. From 1500 to 2000 exiles have sought a shelter, and many of them have made themselves at home there. Some have brought capital with them—whatever they were able to scrape together out of the wreck of their fortunes. They have purchased land—one of them an estate worth £7000, and have become naturalised British subjects, although the law in Jamaica allows aliens to possess real estate. They are now pursuing their former avocations as sugar, tobacco, and coffee planters with a success which not only bids fair to retrieve their losses, but which has even the effect of stirring the somewhat dormant energies of the British Creoles in Jamaica, and thereby contributing to the general improvement of that unfortunate island, of which cheering symptoms have been apparent for the last seven or eight years. It is not without great astonishment that these new Cuban settlers become familiar with some of the peculiarities of English law in their new home. One of them was lately involved in a law-suit about the title deeds of an estate he had purchased, against no less a person than the Queen of England, as owner of the Crown domains in her good island of Jamaica. The Cuban, with great misgiving, brought his action into court at the earnest suggestion of his lawyer. The case was tried, and the Cuban—won the suit! Think of the Government ever allowing itself

to be beaten by a private subject, and he an alien, in Spain or in her colonies!

The misery of the Spanish colony is thus not unlikely to prove a godsend to the English island. It is an ill-wind that blows nobody good; and at all times some countries have profited by the calamities of other communities. Flemish wars and Huguenot persecutions aided the development of wool and silk manufacture in England; and pauperism, militarism, and general misrule conspire to swell the population of the United States. There was a time, not very remote, when Cuba herself received a new infusion of life from the disturbances of other western regions. The districts of Santiago and Guantànamo owed their prosperity to French immigrants from San Domingo, or Hayti, driven from their homes by negro insurrections. The disorders by which these French colonists were compelled to abandon their native land in 1796, have now overtaken their children and grandchildren in their adopted country. The present generation is as utterly ruined in Cuba as the former was undone in Hayti eighty years ago. All round the fine bay of Santiago the mountains are seamed and scarred by broad bare patches of ground which were till lately the coffee plantations of these thrifty French settlers. As many as 150 of their estates have been ravaged and burnt, and the loss of their mere mov-

able property is reckoned at one million of francs. Hardly any of these French Creoles were tempted to become naturalised in Cuba, but stubbornly clung to their original nationality from father to son. The consequence is that what has been destroyed of theirs is French property, and it is not impossible that the French Government may, at some future time, claim damages in behalf of its subjects. There is nothing more painful than to see among the sufferers from Cuban quarrels these poor neutral aliens who, when flying from calamities of the same nature so many years ago, and bringing their capital, their energy and industry to the Spanish colony, must have been far from thinking that their new country also was to fall a prey to the same evils, and in a great measure from the same causes as those from which they escaped. For the Cuban question, like the Haytian question of 1796, is that of slave emancipation ; and it will only be ultimately solved by determining on what footing free labour may be made to answer both here and throughout the West Indies. Of these ruined French colonists some are still lingering, distressed and disconsolate, at Santiago, but many have betaken themselves to their mother country across the ocean. They are still so numerous at Santiago that they have established a "French Club," facing the *Casino Español*, in the main square of the city. But as "French" in this case means Creole, or native Cuban.

the name has had to be changed. The French or foreign Club has had to be called "Spanish" (*Casino Español para los Estrangeros*), and a Peninsular to be raised to its Presidency. So jealous are the Spaniards of local aspirations, that any club daring to call itself *Casino Cubano*, would be stormed and burnt to the ground before three days were over.

It is painful to think what a mere "ha'p'orth" of fighting goes to all this "intolerable deal" of ravage and destruction. I travelled from Santiago to San Luis, a distance of 32 kilometres, by rail. The line is cut through a deep gorge of the Sierra Maestra, and is flanked all along by little wooden towers, mere huts guarded by detachments of regular Spanish troops, each little garrison from five to fifty men strong. All along the railway line, and beyond it, all the way to Puerto Principe the head-quarters of the Central Department, and to Havannah, there are telegraph wires which run across the Island throughout the whole Insurgent district. These wires are also under the protection of detached military posts; and so utterly incapable or powerless are the Insurgent Chiefs Cespedes, Agramonte, the Brothers Garcias, Modesto Diaz, Maximo Gomez, and the rest, that any interruption either to railway trains or telegraphic messages is an extremely rare occurrence. The Insurgents, if we are to believe the military authorities here,

do not muster more than 3000 effective combatants ; but by the estimate of impartial men their number is estimated at 8000, most of them well armed. Can it be conceived that so strong a force, divided into almost ubiquitous bands, and favoured by high mountains and dense forests, should find it so difficult either to stop the railway traffic or to prevent telegraphic intercourse ? A few mounted men with half the spirit of the Prussian Uhlans, or a picked band with some of the dash and determination of Garibaldi's "thousand," would long ago have burnt half the towers of the Spanish soldiers and overpowered their feeble garrisons ; they would repeatedly have beaten up the quarters of the volunteers of the town, and carried such places as Manzanillo and even Santiago by a *coup de main* ; at all events, they would have distinguished themselves by exploits more heroic than the mere attack on some lonely plantation and the plunder of its contents. To fight however, even with the odds on their side, to take the initiative against the troops, or even to await their attacks, seems not, at least for the present, to enter into the plans of the Insurgents. On the other hand, the troops, whenever they come to any knowledge of the position of the Insurgents, have to plunge in single file into the thick of pathless forests ; they grope up blindly till warned by a few random shots of the presence of the Insurgents, and they fire wildly into

the bush without aim, till the silence of the enemy's fire assures them that the rebels have decamped, when they take possession of the abandoned field, sing out, "Victory," and bring back a mule or a couple of naked negro children as spoils and trophies.

The real truth is that both parties are, from different reasons, interested in avoiding encounters and prolonging the strife. The Cubans are confident that time is fighting their battles. They think, not without reason, that they must in the long run tire out, dishearten, and demoralize the troops at present arrayed against them; and they rely on the incessant and incurable disorders of Spain for a gradual diminution and final cessation of yearly reinforcements. Already this year, they say, not more than 2000 men, and of these many worthless adventurers, have been landed at Nuevitas. The Republic has hardly troops enough to confront the Carlists in Navarre and the Alphonsists in Catalonia; hardly troops enough to hold its own in Madrid, even supposing that those troops are bent on supporting it. For months, or perhaps years, anarchical Spain can hardly bestow a serious thought upon Cuba; and the commanding officers here, seeing themselves abandoned to their own scanty resources, are only anxious to give up the game and resign their office. General Morales, who was in command of the Eastern Department while I was in Santiago, left that city for Havannah and Spain early

in March, and Cevallos, who was Captain-General and Governor of the whole Island, followed a few weeks later. Even those who are not eagerly soliciting their recall have neither the means nor the mind for extensive operations, and limit their efforts to that objectless desultory warfare which has hitherto led, and which can lead to no other result than to perpetuate the struggle. Owing either to false views of economy in the payment of spies or to the disaffection of the people, the Spanish officers are absolutely in the dark as to the movements of their adversaries; while the Insurgents, sure of the sympathy of the Creoles in town and country, keep up a regular intercourse with every part of the Island. They have secret committees at work for them here at Santiago, at Manzanillo, at Puerto Principe, and everywhere else; and through them communicate with Key West in Florida, with Jamaica, and with any point from which arms, ammunition, provisions, and fresh auxiliaries may be sent to them. I have alluded to the beauty of the coast of Cuba and of the inlets with which it is indented; but all along both north and south there are labyrinths of what are here called *cayos*, coral reefs and banks covered with bright verdure, still and solitary, through which smugglers of every description can thread their way with perfect impunity, dodging the coastguards from islet to islet, and choosing their own time and spot to land their

cargo. The Spanish cruisers might as well hope to scoop out the Gulf of Mexico with a teaspoon as to put any check upon the Cuban contraband of war. But in reality both the land and sea forces of Spain are only half-hearted in the work ; the soldiers especially are so ill-paid, so ill-fed, and exposed to such sufferings from the climate that desertions to the enemy are becoming of frequent occurrence, even among the non-commissioned officers, some of whom are to be heard of now among the most skilful and adventurous Insurgent leaders. For their own part, the Spanish commanding officers, anxious to fill up vacancies in the ranks, enlist adventurers of every description, and even the despised Chinese coolies are occasionally to be seen clad in Spanish uniforms ; but in the ranks immediately below the supreme commanders there are men, as I have said, to whom the war ensures comparatively easy work with exceptionally speedy promotion : these find their advantage in the indefinite prolongation of hostilities, and have means to prolong them at their own discretion. Military men, like other officials, have been for centuries, and are still sent to this unfortunate colony only to make money ; and as they hate both the land and the people, and are over-anxious to accomplish their object and be off, they go to work with a boldness and recklessness that know no limits, and which have thoroughly vitiated every rank of the rulers as well as

every class of the subjects. "Robamos todos"—we are all thieves—is the motto.

Even the State religion, such as it is, has no hold whatever on the masses. In towns like Manzanillo, Cienfuegos, Sagua, or Villaclara, numbering from 12,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, there is only one church with three priests. Those who are acquainted with the rites of the Roman Catholic Church well know that three priests could not, even by superhuman efforts, administer the sacraments to one hundredth part of their flocks. In an Italian town of the same size and population, there would be a bishop, one or more chapters of fat canons, a seminary, at least 300 priests, and half-a-dozen monastic communities of both sexes. Whether too few or too many priests should be considered the greater evil I would not take upon myself to decide; and certainly the Cubans do not complain of their scanty allowance of religious instructors. At Santiago there is an archbishop who is "Primate of all the Indies," a whole hierarchy, and an incessant ringing of bells; yet one hears nothing but evil reports of the priests, who, like the lay functionaries, are mostly Spaniards bent on making money, and enjoying life, and anxious to go back to the Mother Country with the spoils of the Colony. A planter near Cienfuegos, the other day, visited with some misgivings as to his duties, wished to have the small

fry of his negroes baptized. It was time, he thought, that the poor Africans should cease to be brought up like dumb cattle, and it was well that they should be made Christians before they aspired to be free men. The priest who performed the ceremony claimed the fee of one gold ounce (\$17, or £3. 8s.) for each of the christened children ; and enforced payment ; but the result was to deter other slave-owners from bringing their *cria*, or negro nursery, to the font ; so that the little Africans will grow up as unmitigated heathens as their fathers have been before them. It is easy to say that so venal and debased a religion is no better than no religion at all ; but no religion in Cuba is tantamount to no instruction and no morality. And indeed with respect to instruction, if we except the upper classes who travel and whose children are either educated in Europe or the United States, the mass of the people must rely for their intellectual and moral training on schools which are only one degree better than Spanish schools. There is absolutely no reading in this country ; and even at Santiago, a town of forty thousand inhabitants, so far as I could see or was assured, there is no book shop. For what concerns morality, I need only mention that one of my kind hosts in a southern seaport—a native of Europe, a well-educated man, and who treated me to some excellent Bavarian beer, as well as to a *sonata* of Beethoven, and a selection from Meyerbeer's '*Muette de Portici*,'

all exquisitely executed on the violin, accompanied by a handsome lady on the pianoforte—on being complimented by me on his own and his “wife’s” performance, took the first opportunity to lead me aside, and whispered that the “lady” was not his wife, as “wives in Cuba were for foreigners altogether out of the question; that both they and the Peninsulars only ‘keep company’ with the Cuban women who have no objection to the arrangement, and who are equally happy to live with the stranger so long as he remains, and to take up with some other when he goes, as he is sure to do whenever he has made money to the full bent of his covetousness.” It is but justice to say that, although my good friend evidently conceived that “to wed a Cuban would be to lose caste,” I know instances where English and other foreign settlers have married Creole women, and where they had by no means to rue the consequences.

Nothing could be more natural, under such circumstances, than that a people so long plunged into the depth of utter barbarism, and yet both by its own native instincts and by its almost incessant contact with more advanced nations, and especially with the United States, prompted to cherish vague yet generous aspirations, should look with deep and implacable resentment on the Government which has brought it to its present condition. That Cuba must be rid of

Spain and the Spaniards is with every native of this Island an article of firm faith. How the liberation may be effected is a point on which men cannot easily agree; but, as I said, the Cubans count on the chapter of accidents, on the distress of their enemies, on the sympathy of their friends. There is a great stir, we are told, among the negroes in the United States, thousands of whom could be easily enlisted in any enterprise intended to liberate their African brethren from the thralldom to which they are doomed in the Cuban plantations. But such a means of deliverance, were it even really at hand, would involve great risk for the white population of the Island, be it Cuban or Spanish; indeed, the Insurrection here is already too blindly relying on negro help, as more than one-half of the combatants in the rebel ranks consists of coloured people. These negroes are not as a rule runaway slaves, but merely slaves who have been forcibly removed from their plantations when these were plundered and destroyed by the Insurgents. In many instances these men soon tire of the hardships and privations of their new life in the bush, and hanker after the pig and yams which they were allowed to rear for their own benefit in their former servile condition, and a kind of home sickness very frequently prompts them to avail themselves of any opportunity of surrendering to the troops and asking to be sent back to their work. All this, however, does not preclude the

possibility of an eventual rise of the whole negro race at some future period, if political agitators, and especially coloured men from the States, are sent as apostles of freedom among them. There is no doubt that some uneasy feeling is beginning to spread among the Spaniards of the inevitable *Casino Español* of every city, about the attitude and disposition of their slaves, among whom a new spirit seems to have been awakened by the publication of those clauses in the Moret Law respecting the emancipation of the unborn children. To perceive a mere gleam of hope of future liberty, to aspire to hasten it, and to fret against any delay in its attainment, are, even for the most indolent drudge, one and the same thing. Every day the slave-owners contrive to put off abolition adds fresh dangers to their position. They are aware of it; but they declare very loudly and openly that in any extreme case they would not shrink from a war of races; and that they are, if put to it, sufficiently strong to take the initiative in the work of extermination, to which either themselves or the Creoles with their negroes must succumb.

It may be said that I return too frequently to this subject, and that I dwell too constantly on the gloomy prospects of a future as yet vague and remote. But I am here confronted by a great problem, or rather by a complication of problems, and it is in vain that I apply to any man for a solution that may not involve

much violence or that may not be attended with great ruin. The Insurrection contemptible as it may seem, and so intangible that some sceptical persons consider it "a myth," is however a stubborn fact, and it seems equally impossible that it should ever be victorious or that it should be utterly crushed. We all remember the Carlist war which for seven years ravaged the Peninsula. That war never came to a natural end. It was terminated by the treason of a chief who sold his fellow-officers to the enemy in the lump. That is what is called in Spanish a "compromise" and there are men here who think that Cespedes could as easily be bought over as Maroto was. But they do not reflect that in Spain the war arose merely from the hostility of parties, while here it rests on the antipathy of races. It seems impossible to me to entertain the hope of any reconciliation between Spaniards and Cubans, or of any scheme upon which they might freely consent to live together at peace in the Island. On the other hand, it is equally difficult to conceive how either of the contending parties may ever acquire sufficient permanent ascendancy to absorb or annihilate the other. The Spaniards, however well-armed, organised and equipped, are not strong enough to exterminate all the Cubans: the Cubans, however numerous, are not sufficiently brave and resolute to expel all the Spaniards. Remove that mere phantom of authority which is still exercised by the Spanish Government,

and there must necessarily be war between the two parties till either the one—the Cuban—is destroyed or utterly subjugated, or the other—the Peninsular—is driven from the Island. But the authority of the Spanish Government, if still able to put off the evil day, is utterly powerless to avert it. Whatever may be the destinies of Cuba it seems very clear that Spain has long lost all chance of contrölling or influencing them. Her Government has neither the power to ensure the victory of one party over the other, nor the skill to reconcile and bring them to live together in unity. The Spaniards are still crying out that “Cuba must not be lost;” but the truth is that Cuba has long been lost to them, and that, instead of the Madrid Government exercising any rule in the Colony, it is the Colony—it is Don Juan de Zulueta and his slave-holding friends—that have the Madrid rulers, monarchical or republican, in their pockets. Again, the expectation that matters may be settled by the intervention of a foreign Power seems to me utterly groundless. A very evident proof of the utter impotence of the United States to interfere in the affairs of Cuba may be seen in the anxiety evinced by the Cabinet of Washington to devolve the charge of such an interference upon the Government of Great Britain. Many Americans assert that it is the duty of England to recognize the Cuban Insurgents as belligerents. But to say nothing of the justice and expediency of adopting such a course to the detriment

of an independent country and in a matter of mere internal and national policy, it is difficult to see how the meddling of any foreign State, even if it could destroy Spain, could possibly save Cuba; how it could remove the difficulties of the Island, or how it could help aggravating them. A foreign State could take up the cause of the Insurgents; it could claim Cuba for the Cubans; it might break up the *Casino Español*, depose the Peninsular party from the height of their power, and ruin the slave-owners by imposing upon them the immediate emancipation of their slaves. Mere destruction is always only too easy. The ruin of the slave-owners must needs involve at least the temporary ruin of the country; and it is this that a foreign State would, above all things, be anxious to avoid. The assistance of a foreign State would certainly ensure the victory of one party over the other—say of the Creoles over the Peninsulars—but a victory would not preclude the struggle; and such a struggle, between two races animated by deep-seated resentment and burning to revenge long-treasured grievances, is precisely what a foreign State, prompted by humane motives, would be most anxious to prevent. It comes to this—that if parties in Cuba are bent on mutual destruction, all that a foreign State could do would be to help and hasten them on their way to it.

Turn whichever way I may, I am unable to see by

what means the ultimate pacification of the Island is to be effected. I was for a long time inclined to disbelieve, either as utterly false or grossly exaggerated, the tales that the world has heard of wholesale butcheries and wanton cruelties perpetrated by the belligerents on both sides in this miserable Civil War. But I have since inquired with some diligence into the matter, and I am satisfied that the reports were rather within than beyond the mark. I was for several days at an estate in one of the central districts of the Island, the owner of which, a Creole, has for several years tried the experiment of free labour as applied to a sugar plantation, and has thereby incurred the savage enmity of all the slave-owners in the neighbourhood. He is a man still young, of an intensely sanguine disposition, who has travelled much, has had the advantages of a thorough European education, and has brought back notions incompatible with the institutions still flourishing in the Spanish colonies. He took me round his extensive lands where men, he told me, "loved labour for its own sake;" and where he also showed me in some cottages the widows and orphans of some of the patriots fallen in the war, to whom he allows free quarters and the best means of subsistence he can afford. Fearing lest I might mistrust mere *ex-parte* statements, he managed for me a clandestine meeting with an officer of the regular Spanish army, a man living in great poverty, with his wife and a large brood


of children, in a mere log-hut or "fort," in command of a detachment of twenty soldiers; yet displaying amidst his domestic straits much of that innate dignity and easy courtesy which constitute the peculiar charm of the Spanish character to a stranger. We brought back the young officer from his garrison to my host's well-supplied board; supper and talk were carried on to a late hour in the night. Men warmed in the flow of conversation; all their reserve and natural distrust of a stranger were laid aside, and I learnt more about the incidents and the nature of the Cuban Insurrection on that occasion than during the remainder of the two months of my stay in the Island. Several European settlers with whom I came in contact at various stages of my progress only deepened the impressions I received on that memorable night.

All the information I gathered led to the conclusion that "nothing exceeds the hatred the Creoles entertain towards the Spaniards—except their fear of them." We have here an instance of the lengths to which a terrorised government or people will carry their terrorising measures. The Spaniards were at the beginning greatly alarmed at the proportions assumed in 1869 by the Insurrection, and were convinced that they could never deal too promptly nor too strongly with it. It was chiefly the territory of the "*Cinco Villas*," or Five Towns, in the Central

Department — Villaclara, Sagua, Cienfuegos and Remedios—that was visited with the most terrific executions. In that region the Spaniards went to work upon the principle that “prevention is better than cure.” They took the disaffection for granted, and determined that it should never ripen into open rebellion. Not only did they shoot all the Insurgents whom they caught with arms in their hands, but they slew without mercy many of the unarmed fugitives whom terror of their approach had driven into the woods, and they doomed to the same fate others who had remained quietly at home, but who were suspected of sympathy with the Rebel cause. One of the first men who fell into their hands was my Creole host; the gentleman, who as I said had incurred their displeasure by presuming to employ none but free labourers in his plantations. The Volunteers of the petty towns in the neighbourhood invaded and ravaged his estate and denounced him to the soldiers, who arrested him, shot two of his foremen and several inoffensive countrymen before his eyes in cold blood and without even the pretence of a trial, kept him in a condemned cell for three days, threatening him with the same fate, the officer in command meeting all his protests and remonstrances with the cool remark, “All I know is that if I shoot you I shall be promoted a step.” The prisoner slipped through his hands nevertheless, and upon clearing

himself of all imputations before the Captain-General at Havannah, he was reassured as to his personal safety ; but the General at the same time advised him, " as a friend," to say nothing about damages for his destroyed property, as, " under the circumstances, he ought to be only too thankful to have escaped with his life."

It could not of course be expected that the Insurgents on their own side should abstain from fearful reprisals. The practice with them when a prisoner, and especially an officer, falls into their hands, is to tie his feet up to a tree, and to pile up fuel under the dangling head ; thus burning their enemy alive with a slow fire. Indeed, it would not be easy to ascertain on which side the atrocities first began, or are carried to greater lengths. The rule is that all prisoners be shot without discrimination. Nay, the conquerors even grudge their powder and shot, and the victims are usually despatched with *machetes*, a kind of long chopping-knife or cutlass peculiar to a cane-growing country, and to be almost invariably seen at the side of every combatant as well as in every labourer's hand. Some of the soldiers and Volunteers have acquired such skill in the use of this weapon that they cut off a man's head with all the mastery of professional executioners. These men march in the rear of their detachments ; and, upon any suspected person being apprehended, the officer in command, after a brief examination, orders the prisoner " to the rear," where



he is immediately hacked to pieces by the inexorable *Macheteros*. As a rule also the bodies of the slain are left unburied on the spot where they fall. The turkey buzzards swarming everywhere in the Island, and whose life is protected by law on account of their usefulness as public scavengers, fatten on the rotting human carcasses; and it is not without a shudder that one sees these foul birds hovering everywhere in the air, and poisoning themselves on their wings above the forests where the remnants of their hideous feasts in every stage of decomposition still attract them.

Women fare as badly in the hands of the combatants as men; unless their personal attractions recommend them to a temporary reprieve and put off their execution till they have endured all conceivable outrages. Houses, where scores of young women were hiding, have been entered by a licentious soldiery with officers at their head, by whom every woman was first violated, then killed. The Havannah and Madrid authorities have before them evidence of some of the most shocking cases of this description in which the crime was both proved and punished; but how many more might be mentioned, in which it was impossible to bring the offenders to justice! There have been frequent instances of wives whose husbands were either killed before their very eyes or driven to the bush in sheer despair, and who presently made friends with the officers who had widowed them, consenting to live

with them on any terms. Of this fact I was equally assured by my Creole host and by the Spanish officer who sat with us at the same hospitable board; with this difference however, that the latter quoted it as evidence of the innate baseness and depravity of the Creole women, while the former contended that these women in consenting to live with their captors did so from a vindictive design to deal with them after the manner of Delilahs—a design which was often carried into execution, the women acting as spies on the movements of their new lovers and leading them into Insurgent ambushes. People in the “Five Towns” grow very eloquent when they relate the exploits of a handsome girl, whom they call “The Maid of Las Tunas.” This fair adventuress used to ride in arms, Amazon-like, as a scout to the Insurgents, with all the zeal and intrepidity of Garibaldi’s young Countess at Varese. She fell three times into the hands of the Spaniards, to whom she had become well known. Twice did her charms redeem her from the hands of the officers, but in the third instance she came into the power of a less susceptible warrior, who delivered her over to the brutality of his soldiers, after which he doomed her to the fate of Joan of Arc.

As happens in all wars, and especially in Civil Wars, the combatants on either side are not always answerable for the worst deeds perpetrated in their name. The disturbed districts are overrun by camp followers,

*Bandoleros*, and marauders of the worst description, who, hoisting now one flag, now the other, really make war on their own account, and whose hand is against every man. These when caught are with great impartiality immediately shot by both parties; but no readiness or activity of summary justice seems greatly to affect their number or to check their audacity. It is mainly on account of them that a ride from one to the other of the "Five Towns," and especially from Villaclara to Trinidad or San Juan de los Remedios, cannot be safely undertaken without an escort. To what extent war and its consequences have ravaged these districts may be inferred from the fact, already mentioned, that the population of the Central Department, embracing a whole third of the Island, is according to official statistics reduced to 75,000 souls, whites and blacks included. Besides massacres, proscriptions, and banishments, mere administrative stupidity contributed to turn the country into a desert. By a decree of Caballero de Rodas, in July, 1869, the whole population of the rural districts was "concentrated"—i.e., huddled together in the little town of St. Espiritu, with a view to have it under strict guard and control, where, owing to want of proper accommodation and wholesome food, and indeed of air to breathe, they were soon invaded by cholera, smallpox, and other diseases, to which in some cases one in ten, and in others one in three,

rapidly succumbed; the ravage soon extending to the soldiers and Volunteers set to watch over them. I have known families belonging to St. Espiritu who were on that occasion driven from the town by that awful mortality, and whom nothing in the world would now induce to go back to their homes, unable as they are to overcome the bare recollection of the sufferings they have witnessed. While the population thus perished, the troops achieved the thorough devastation of the country, burning the crops, slaughtering the cattle, gutting the houses, hoping thus, as their Commander said in his order of the day, to "starve out the Rebellion." By such means a great portion of the Central Department has been brought into subjection; and "order" reigns there. It is not impossible that the application of the same remedy may effect the cure of rebellion in the eastern districts; though it must be observed that the region of the Five Towns, from Matanzas to Cienfuegos and Villaclara, and all along the southern coast, is almost a dead level, where a few sugar plantations are scattered like vast islands on a surface still encumbered with untilled savannahs and scrubby forests, or, as the natives call them, *Montes*. But beyond Trinidad and throughout the territory of Puerto Principe and Santiago de Cuba are real *Montañas*—hilly ridges covered with thick woods, where the Insurgents may offer an obstinate resistance, and where, in the opinion

of most men, the Civil War may be perpetuated. But even in the districts where every spark of the Insurrection has been trodden down, that hatred which prompted it is far from subsiding; it smoulders on the contrary more sullenly than ever, and it finds vent in passionate outbursts, in strong appeals to the stranger, all the more vehement from having been so long pent up and smothered by fear and mistrust.

The mutual animosity which sets parties in Cuba against each other has nothing in common with the hostile feeling which in other countries animates the subject against the ruling race. In Lombardy, in Poland, in Turkey, in Ireland, the line of demarcation has been traced by nature, and it is seldom entirely or even sensibly over-stepped. In Milan the Austrian was as fully a stranger after two centuries of domination as he was on his first arrival. But in Cuba the Peninsular and the Creole are identical in blood and language. They are brought together by constant intercourse and intermarriage. And yet it may be taken for granted that every immigrant Spaniard despises the native Cuban; every native Cuban detests the immigrant Spaniard, though the tie between them is often that of father and son. The Peninsular looks upon the Creole—even upon his Creole wife, whom he marries for her money, for her good looks, or because he does not know

where else to look for a helpmate—as a mere half-caste. He detects, or fancies he detects, in every native the taint of negro and of slave blood, and he taunts him with all the vices inherent to a servile condition. A Spanish landowner will point to his steward or overseer with the sneering remark that one may see “a touch of the tar-brush” on the fellow’s countenance, though the man is often whiter and decidedly more intelligent than his master. The master, though he comes from Spain, shows not unusually traces of foreign and even of African blood in his veins; but that, he says, can only be Moorish blood, and the Moors were a warlike and a ruling race. But his servant is, in all probability, only two or three steps removed from a slave, and must needs have the soul of a slave. He despises and mistrusts him, and is at no pains to conceal his scorn and suspicion, much as he needs his services. The Cuban, on the other hand, whether or not he has African blood in his veins, is and has been for many generations nursed by negro women and brought up by and with them. He evinces strong sympathies with the negro race, and frets against the harshness and cruelty with which the Peninsular *Negrero* is apt to treat it. It is not that the Cuban cherishes the black as “a man and a brother,” or that he looks upon slavery as too hard a lot for him; but he entertains towards him some of the tenderness a human being shows to a pet animal,

and he cannot brook the barbarity of the Spanish slave driver who thinks that when a gang of slaves is used up by hard work it "pays better" to get a new gang at any price rather than bestow care and expense upon the old one.

It is in a great measure owing to this different disposition of the Spaniard and Cuban towards the negro race that the cause of the Cuban Insurrection has been from the beginning associated with the movement for negro emancipation. There are probably as many Cuban as Spanish slave-owners; but the Creoles are, as a rule, a less thrifty, less energetic, less authoritative set of task-masters. Slavery does not answer well with them; and they fondly persuade themselves that if they had the upper hand, if they could rescue the Island from the tyranny of the Peninsulars, they could easily organize a freer system of labour more remunerative, as well as more consonant with Christian civilization, than that which the Peninsulars have established by the terror of the lash. From the wish to improve the condition of the negro race to an effort to liberate it the transition is easy; and we see, consequently, throughout the past history of the Island every patriotic attempt of the Creole attended and sometimes preceded by a negro insurrection; and the bands which now under Cespedes and other leaders still hold their ground in the

eastern parts of the Island consist in a great measure of negroes, chiefly runaway slaves. That the Cubans, in the impossibility of otherwise working out the triumph of their cause, might, under favourable circumstances, venture to rouse the slaves to liberty and to arms is not absolutely impossible; though, on the one hand, it is doubtful whether the cry would be responded to by the brutalized race of the black bondsmen, and, on the other hand, the ascendancy of the Peninsulars through their well-organized Volunteer battalions is so firmly established and rests so entirely upon their control over the blacks, that such an attempt might easily lead to the instant extermination of the whole negro race. That the problem which so much puzzles the world may sooner or later come to a bloody solution of that terrible nature it would not be rash to anticipate; though we must bear in mind that the signal of the conflict must come from the Cubans; and these are at all times naturally too timid, and at this moment too utterly disheartened by recent chastisements to risk an open outbreak unless encouraged by the hope of a very considerable foreign aid.

But, although away from the bush and rock of the far east, there is no open warfare, the longing for action among the Cubans is intense; and it reveals itself in that stir among the negroes which grows daily more perceptible, and in those deeds of murder

and arson with the half-suppressed reports of which we are frequently startled, and which are generally, though I know not with what foundation, ascribed to the disaffected Chinese. A slave-owner who little cares to conceal his ill-will towards that Asiatic people assured me that no less than fifty capital executions of Chinese for crimes of blood prompted by revenge occur in the plantations every year. But it must be remembered that the Chinese are only "contracted," not bought and sold slaves, and that they cannot be put to death without at least some form of trial; while a refractory or even simply a fugitive negro can be disposed of without anything being ever known as to the nature of his offence or of its punishment.

From all I have said I believe it may be easily understood how thin is the crust of the volcano on which society treads in this Island. We have here two white races united in blood and yet irreconcilably divided at heart; almost balanced in material forces but of different organization, while subject to them are other races different in blood yet united at heart by the common bond of suffering, ready, when properly plied by artful agitators, to throw their whole weight on that side of the scale which may offer them the best chance of emancipation. The conflict may not be this year or the next. It may be almost indefinitely put off; but it is nevertheless inevitable, unless

some foreign influence, some *Deus ex machinâ*, be at the pains of proposing a peaceful solution of that problem of slave emancipation which has everywhere been found so arduous, and which has in every instance led to violent collision.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CUBA AND JAMAICA.

Rambling in Jamaica—The Country—Its People—Cuban Refugees—a Tropical Eden—Conditions of Jamaica—The Negroes—The Coolies—The Whites—Future Prospects.

IF the Spaniards call Cuba the “Pearl of the Antilles,” by the name of what gem shall the English designate their own Jamaica? I have rambled for weeks up the hills and down the dales of this “Land of Streams and Woods,” and I know nothing that surpasses its loveliness in or out of the tropics. England is the Queen of so many islands she has so many new homes for her enterprising children; gold-diggings and pearl fisheries give such change and sudden turns to the tide of her emigration, that she seems to have no thought to bestow on her old West-Indian possessions. Jamaica too has been for many years unfortunate: her planters have been ruined, her estates have been abandoned, and there has been a falling

off in her revenue as well as in her white population. But what if the Island were now looking up again? What if labour were being reorganized on new principles? if landed property were rising in price? the symptoms of a new life, of a spirit of progress and enterprise, were everywhere apparent? Would the beauty, fertility and luxuriance of the Island, the mildness and salubrity of its many climates, its agricultural and commercial resources, and the blessings of a free and provident Government vainly appeal to the interest of British settlers?

I took my passage from Santiago de Cuba to Kingston on board the 'Caravelle,' one of the French Transatlantic steamers plying between the two ports monthly. We left Santiago at noon, and had a strong north wind to waft us across the seventy-miles' channel that separates the two islands. But before midnight we had doubled Morant Point at the eastern end of Jamaica, and glided along shore under shelter of the coast and in sight of the cloud-capped Blue Mountains, waiting for the morning to light us into Kingston harbour. The moment I landed at Kingston—at 8 A.M.—I lost all control over my movements. Hospitality, which is a frenzy with the good Jamaicans and with those who settle among them, laid hold of me and hardly allowed me the insight of the Clarendon Hotel, the only house of public accommodation I ever entered

during my stay in the Island. I lingered for a few days on the Port Royal Mountains, at Craigton, Newcastle, and all that neighbourhood; then hired horses and a carriage, struck across the Stony Hill Pass from south to north into the Wag-water, or Agua Alta Valley—for so the English have transformed the old Spanish name of the river—abided for a few days with the owners of some of the estates in that neighbourhood; then travelled eastwards across St Mary's County, or "Parish," at Agua Alta Vale and Water Valley; visited at Port Maria the localities where they still show the footsteps of Columbus; next proceeded further east to Ocho Rios; rode up the famous "Gully Road," and saw the glorious "Roaring River;" further, I travelled along-shore into St. Anne's Parish far beyond Don Christopher's Cove; and then again struck across country into the mountains of Trevelyan; descended into the glen of "River Head," and clambered up into the mountains as far as "the Alps," whence I again turned southwards, drove down into the valley of Moneague; crossed the Pass of Mount Diablo, from the windings of which I caught glimpses of St. Thomas in the Vale—a vision of Paradise—and finally across the renowned Bogswalk, or *Boca del Agua*, the Via Mala of Jamaica, I came down to Spanish Town—the old capital, Santiago de la Vega—and thus found my way back to Kingston.

The tour lasted a fortnight. Were this a descriptive book, I fancy even I could become eloquent and fall into raptures at the bare recollection of the lovely scenes amongst which I lingered, and dwell with almost sentimental fondness on the cordiality with which the good people on my way, without assuring me that "their house was my own," made me truly at home among them, and encompassed me with so much real love that to part with them after only twenty-four hours' domestication was like taking leave of friends of many years' standing. All this however, has been every traveller's experience in Jamaica, time out of memory ; and it has often been told in language which would render every allusion to the subject on my part completely superfluous. My object in visiting Jamaica was simply to complement by a survey of that island my observations on Cuba. I felt that the chief questions connected with the destinies of the Spanish Colony could best be solved by comparing its conditions with those of the countries in which the same questions had before been debated ; and, had time been allowed to me, I would have extended my researches all over the English and French West Indies, as well as over the Southern States of the American Union, and the republics of Hayti and San Domingo. Not being able to accomplish what I wished, I did what I could by taking Jamaica on my way home.

One of my first purposes, upon landing at Kingston, was to see some of the leading men among the Cuban refugees now domiciled in Jamaica. Not all these political exiles have taken part in the Insurrection ; some have simply been compromised by their sympathy with its cause. Upon these, I need hardly say, the Spanish Government bestows particular attention. They are supposed to be as busily employed in promoting the interests of the rebellion as those among their fellow-sufferers who have migrated to the United States, and who have their Cuban Clubs at New York, New Orleans, and elsewhere. Complaints have been lodged with the civil authorities in Jamaica, as well as with the Foreign Office in London, that arms, ammunitions, and other warlike stores have been and are incessantly sent forth from some of the ports of the British island, and landed on the coasts of the disturbed districts in Cuba. The Spanish Government have expressed no doubt as to the perfect loyalty and due diligence with which the British authorities have at all times proceeded in this business ; and they have even thanked the Governor of Jamaica for the punctuality with which he has discharged all the duties of good neighbourhood towards them ; but they contend that, even with the best intentions, the British authorities have been unable to prevent intercourse between the refugees and the Insurgents, and the clandestine conveyance to Cuba of what is called “contraband of war.”

Some very important distinctions should be drawn between these various charges. The Jamaica Government consider themselves fully competent, as they are in duty bound, to frustrate any attempt at armed expeditions, and to seize any warlike stores intended to disturb or imperil the peace of their neighbours; and they are convinced that not only could no arms or ammunition be exported from their island, but that they could not even be imported into it without their knowledge, and they think that their diligence on that score has in no instance been at fault; or in other words, that stores of that description can never have reached Cuba from their shores. But their legal power extends no further; and they do not conceive themselves entitled to deprive the Cuban refugees of the rights awarded to them by the free laws of England, to violate their domicile, seize and open their correspondence, hinder their private meetings, and deprive them of all communication with their native land. The channel between the coasts of the two islands is barely 70 miles wide; and the Jamaica Government cannot be expected to be more successful in searching every open boat that may venture from shore to shore, apparently bound on no unlawful errand, than the Cuban authorities have hitherto shown themselves. There is, I believe, little sincerity in the outcry which is raised in Cuba with respect to the connivance of the English and other Governments

with the Cuban Insurrection, although such a clamour is grounded on the reports both of the friends and adversaries of that revolutionary movement. The truth is, that on the one hand, the Spanish authorities are heartily ashamed of the little progress they make in quenching the last sparks of the revolt, and they are only too glad to attribute their want of success to the ill-will or negligence of neighbouring States. On the other hand, the Insurgents, for their own part, are anxious to represent these States as at least favourable to their cause, and endeavour to keep up the drooping courage of their partisans by teaching them to rely on sympathy, and to look for eventual aid, from abroad.

The Cubans I have met in Jamaica are looked upon as inoffensive, law-abiding men, and have won the good-will both of the authorities and the people among whom they are settled. I need hardly say that they are sanguine as to the ultimate success of the Insurrection, and declare that they are endeavouring to contribute to it by every means which the laws of England and her colony warrant. They advise me to be prepared for important events in Cuba; resting their prognostics on the difficulties into which Spain has been thrown by her recent Republican revolution. I must say, in sober truth, that I have not met a single man, woman, or child in Cuba, or among these exiled

Cubans, who entertains the least faith in a Spanish Republic; and the consequence of the attempt to proclaim one is, in their opinion, only too likely to pave the way for the triumph of a reactionary government, be it Carlist or Alphonsist, whose measures cannot fail to be hostile to Cuba and fatal to all hope either of slave emancipation or of any possible pacification of the Island. With respect to the Cuban patriots who abhor the very thought of any reconciliation with Spain, a relapse of the Peninsula into either Moderado or Unionist rule and a consequent recourse to arbitrary and violent measures to stifle the Cuban Insurrection, is considered as most likely, by driving the Insurgents and their sympathizers to despair, to nerve them to efforts which, in the present helpless condition of the Peninsula, may be crowned with ultimate success. As for the Peninsulars, the proclamation of a Republic has had the effect of causing such loyalty as they might still harbour in their bosoms to ooze out at their fingers' ends. They begin to see, now more clearly than ever, that it is only by their own exertions they can hope to hold their ground in the Colony; and whatever they may think of their chances of fighting single-handed, they are coming to the conclusion that they must fight for themselves, and, if pressed by necessity, consent to dissociate their cause from that of the Mother Country.

Should these Cuban refugees ever go back to their country, their residence in the British colony will not altogether have been lost upon them. The contrast between the two Islands must strike them somewhat forcibly. Cuba is ten times as large as Jamaica; and the revenue of the Spanish Province, arising merely from the prosperity of one-third of its surface, exceeds that of the British Colony in the same proportions. But Jamaica has gone through and survived the crisis with which Cuba is now threatened. The future—the immediate future, at least—is all in favour of the smaller island; and it remains to be seen whether the Spanish possession will be able to profit by the lesson conveyed to her by the disasters and incipient recovery of the British dependency. That, apart from political circumstances Jamaica has great material advantages over Cuba, is meanwhile undeniable. Nearly the whole of Western and Central Cuba is a flat. There is nothing to temper the heat of its torrid climate, and the rapid devastation of its forests tends to aggravate its dryness and to raise its temperature. Jamaica is still, as her Indian name implied, the “Land of Springs and Woods.” Her lofty mountain ranges everywhere intersect the plain. One hour’s drive is sufficient to convey a man from any point on the coast to the breezy hills. From Kingston to King’s House, five miles off at the foot of the hills, and from this latter place to Craigton at about the same dis-

tance on the hills themselves, one passes through the various degrees of temperature which distinguish in Mexico the *Tierra Caliente* from the *Tierra Templada* and the *Tierra Fria*. Those health-restoring "hills," which in India can only be reached by many days' travel, are here everywhere at hand. They are not the Himalaya; nor even the Alps; but they can compare with whatever the Apennines, the Jura, or the Black Forest can boast either of loftiness or picturesque abruptness; and such spots as Roaring River, Mount Diablo, or the Bogswalk have all the charms of the most striking Swiss scenery, enhanced by glimpses of the ever-present sea, and by a vegetation to the luxuriance and variety of which almost every climate seems to contribute.

And yet this land, which might well answer the description of an earthly Paradise, is to be had almost for the mere asking. An estate which in days of slavery was sold for £60,000, was lately purchased for £5000. A "pen," or cattle-breeding property of 500 acres, with a good house on a hill, commanding such a view of land and sea as could nowhere be rivalled, was bought for £1050; though the purchaser makes £200 a year out of pimento alone, the trees which yield that produce constituting the chief ornament to his park-like domain. And so moderate is the cost of living in the country, that the same gentleman assured me his whole yearly expenditure,

including the maintenance of a large family and the exercise of unbounded hospitality, does not exceed £500. Property is looking up just now in Jamaica, thanks especially to the Cuban refugees, who have taken a few of the long-forsaken sugar estates into their hands, but £5000 or £10,000 would still buy an extent of good and beautiful land fit for a duke's abode, and it is for the most part not land that has never been cleared or tilled, but land that flourished not long ago under man's cultivation, and was known to yield almost a ducal revenue.

Had it not been for negro emancipation, Jamaica would at the present moment be as well off as Cuba; or rather, Cuba would be no better off than Jamaica; for what enriched Cuba was not so much slavery as the long monopoly of slavery and the slave-trade. The Jamaica planters were not only ruined, but disheartened by the unfair competition of slave with free-grown produce. They were at a loss what to do with their freed blacks. They despised, mistrusted, and at last dreaded them. They saw themselves reduced to a small knot of white shepherds in charge of a very numerous black flock; and they had lost that magic ascendancy of race which had hitherto rendered the flock as amenable to rule as dumb cattle. A free negro began to consider himself as good as a white man—nay for agricultural purposes, and in this

climate, far better. He settled or squatted on the land on the footing of equality ; and as he had numbers on his side, he first gained the upper hand by the mere vote, and when thwarted in the exercise of his rights, he attempted to establish his supremacy by sheer force. Had the contest been simply between the white Creoles of Jamaica and their former slaves, the struggle would have been short and decisive. The whites would have utterly disappeared, and Jamaica would have been plunged into all the barbarism of Hayti or San Domingo. But the British Government interposed its strength and authority. It deprived both blacks and whites, at the request of the latter, of the dangerous privilege of self-government, and laid the island under a paternal rule, which, while it ensured peace and order, allowed also as much freedom as very few of the Constitutional or Republican States of the Old or New World are able to enjoy. From the catastrophe of 1865, which was so nearly fatal to the island, to the present day, a new life has developed itself in Jamaica. With a military force not exceeding 864 officers and men, and a police of 680 constables, sergeants, and inspectors, the island enjoys the most profound security. There has been for seven years a progressive rise in the revenue, and a cheering annual surplus over the expenditure. The allowance for public instruction, which was only £4622 in 1866, has now been raised to £19,403,

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and a proportionate increase may be seen in the sums destined to the Departments of Public Works and the Medical Service. Schools, normal schools, reformatories, penitentiaries, infirmaries, asylums, are everywhere rising. The principal of a new college, to be established in the forsaken Government buildings of Spanish Town, has already arrived in the island; and hopes are entertained of some day inaugurating there a university for the whole British West Indies. The highways, which at the time of Mr. Trollope's visit in 1859, were "no roads," are now as good as the best in England. The streams, which at the same epoch hindered the traveller's progress at every step, have been bridged over wherever it was practicable. There is an irrigation canal in progress which will soon give new fertility to more than 50,000 acres of the beautiful plain between Spanish Town and Kingston; and an aqueduct which will lay the dust in the streets of the latter city, and allow the improvements which are going on in its buildings, in its wharves, in its beautiful new market, to be seen to greater advantage. Official statements prove an increase in the export trade and a diminution in crime; and finally the Government Savings Bank, which only came into operation in 1870, and which superseded the unsafe parochial institutions of the same kind in former years, already gives satisfactory results.

Cuba has nearly 1000 miles of railroads, and not

one-half mile of even tolerable road. Jamaica has only a 20-miles railway, but all the State roads and most of the parochial roads are in the best condition. The difference lies in this, that railways in Cuba arise from private speculation, emboldened by a few years of great though artificial and perhaps ephemeral prosperity.. There is £20,000,000 worth of sugar to be carried from the plantations to the seaports, and the demand for conveyance has created the supply. In Jamaica there is little production and less private enterprise, and for such necessity of locomotion as is felt in the country the paternal Government has had to provide. In Cuba, the Government only takes ; in Jamaica, it must give everything. This is so true that, with all the excellent roads there are in Jamaica, not one single line of stage coaches has as yet been started; and the scheme is now happily taken up by the all-doing Government.

There are evils in Jamaica however, with which even that paternal Government finds it difficult to grapple. To say it in one word, the Government cannot "wash the negro white." The population of the island at the last Census of 1871 consisted of 506,154 inhabitants, of whom only 13,101 were white, and, during the ten preceding years there had been a falling off of 715 in the white people, while the blacks and coloured men increased by 65,614. The whites cannot, or will not, do the work of the country, and they know not how

to get the blacks to do it for them. The emancipated negro will either not work at all, or only to the extent and in the manner that best suits himself. He has been taught by his ranting Baptist minister that hired labour is degradation, and he calls his employer "Squire," being told that he has now no other "Massa" than God in Heaven. It would however, be a great mistake to think that the negroes in Jamaica are idling away their existence. Either as free settlers or squatters, or in many instances as farmers paying rent for their small tenements, they cultivate their own "provision grounds"—considerable plots of land on the outskirts of what were once thriving estates—and they produce not only as much food as satisfies their wants, but also as much coffee, sugar and fruit as may find a price in the market, and supply them with whatever luxuries they fancy. No such thing as pauperism is known among them; and although their industry as sugar-growers is clumsy and primitive—although, as addicted to petty rural larceny, they are troublesome to each other as well as to their white neighbours—they constitute on the whole a peaceful and merry, well-to-do community on conditions somewhat analogous to those of the cottagers living at the same time on the produce of their gardens and on that of their hand-looms in the Cantons of Appenzell, Glarus, and other parts of Switzerland. The negroes however, will only work for themselves; or, if they

consent to be hired by the whites, they do so with an independence and sluggishness, and with such a disregard both of the terms of their contract and the convenience of their employers, that in many instances, they drive the latter to despair. It is possible, however, to carry on the management of a large sugar estate by mere negro free labour in Jamaica, and with great success; a fact of which some of the wisest planters have given and still give irrefragable proof. Yet the immense majority, not only of the sugar-growers but even of the cattle-breeders, declare that it is "impossible to get on with the negroes;" they have for several years been hard at work to import coolies, or labourers from India and from other countries, and they are now looking forward with eagerness to the immigration of Maltese.

The employment of coolies on large estates is however, so far as Jamaica is concerned, a novel experiment. Up to 1871 only 7793 labourers had been imported from East India, and 141 from China. These Asiatics, although not physically so strong as the Africans, are more intelligent, more rational beings, and more amenable to settled regular work. The importation of them however, involves great expense; and in any case of misconduct or of the most flagrant breach of contract recourse must be had to the Immigration Agent, a magistrate who can inflict no other punishment than imprisonment—a punishment hardly

less damaging to the planter than the offence itself, as it deprives him of the labour for which alone the coolie is profitable to him. No really available and permanent system of labour can be established, except on terms of the entire independence of master and man, whose mutual interests should render it equally inconvenient to either to part with the other, when the employer would require no stronger hold upon his servant than the threat of dismissal; but I need not say how far the Jamaica planter still is and must long be from these the only practical conditions of real free labour. Moreover the coolie, although he may have a family and establish a home in Jamaica, is as yet only a bird of passage in the country. By the terms of his contract he has a right to be sent back to his native land on the expiration of his term of indenture, at his employer's cost; and although many of them—more than half of them—accept a bounty of £10 or £12 and consent to remain in the Island, it is very seldom that they continue as field-labourers on the estates, most of them repairing to the towns, where they seek employment either as handicraftsmen or as domestic servants. In frequent instances after pocketing the bounty given to induce them to settle as free labourers, they have left Jamaica and migrated to Trinidad and other islands where they were told they could “better themselves;” a somewhat objectionable disregard of implied moral obligation

on their part, even if no condition as to their residence in Jamaica had actually been stipulated in the contract. Other countries have thus the benefit of the men the Island imported at a heavy expense for her own purposes. The elements of a permanent rural, agricultural population are not in my opinion to be easily found in such coolies as have hitherto come from Asia. As yet they are almost lost in the mass of 143,698 native or negro labourers of the country, and these constitute a class of peasant proprietors which, happen what may, must always be looked upon as the actual strength of the community.

It is important I believe that the few whites of Jamaica should be convinced of this stubborn fact; and that they should consider on what terms they may hope to live with their black fellow-countrymen. Whether in the future there is or is not to be in this Island anything like cultivation on a large scale, is a point which must be settled by the whites themselves. The negroes could well dispense with it, Left to themselves they would increase and multiply on their present conditions; and there might be sufficient improvement in the intellectual and moral faculties of future generations to purify the mass from the taint which long slavery has left on the present race, and fit the negroes for the duties and rights of civilized life. Already improvement is everywhere perceptible in their

dwelling, habits, and language, and the schoolmasters give good accounts of their docility and diligence. Were Jamaica to remain in the end a mere negro colony under English rule, it might assume the aspect of an orderly and happy community, contrasting in every respect with the barbarism of the Haytian Republic. But I do not think that matters need be carried so far. I conceive that there is, and will still be room for the whites in the Island; that these can not only hold their own on their estates, but continue to exercise their ascendancy over the negroes and employ them to their joint advantage and with mutual satisfaction. For that purpose I believe that there must be a regeneration among the whites as well as among the blacks. Slavery has had fatal effects on the master as well as on his bondman, and has equally impressed its mark on both the white and the black people. There is nothing more genial, more amiable and hospitable than a Jamaica planter of the old school; but he has too long been a demi-god to his negro thrall to consider himself a mere mortal and to conceive that work is as much his duty as the duty of his dusky attendant. Indolent by long-contracted habit he has too readily laid the blame of his lack of energy and enterprise on the climate, though he has before him signal instances of men of his own complexion, both immigrants and Creoles, capable of as great physical and mental exertion as may be exhibited

in any earthly latitude. Indeed I believe there is nothing more unfounded and nothing more mischievous to the future of Jamaica than this outcry against the enervating influence of its tropical climate. On many a happy home in the mountains—and nearly the whole Island is mountainous—the thermometer averages from 68 deg. to 73 deg. throughout the year. Even at a height of no more than 100ft., the coolness and moisture of the atmosphere correct any depressing effect of the sun's heat, and throughout my trip of two weeks either the sea or the land breezes never allowed me to remember by night or by day that I was in the tropics. If Jamaica is ever again to be the Paradise for which nature intended it, it is necessary that it should receive a fresh infusion of white blood. There is no colony in either hemisphere in which English capital and labour and English enterprise could find more profitable employment. The Cuban refugees who are only degenerate Spaniards find it so, and they purchase with eagerness estates worth £7000 and even £12,000, which the Jamaica planters had long given up and which they might perhaps never have taken to again. Should even the cultivation of sugar be found not to give the best returns, Jamaica is perhaps the only spot in the West Indies where grass, coffee, tobacco and other produce obtainable by less complicated means would answer admirably. Were a few of the energetic young

men who take their money and their energy over to the wasted lands of Virginia or to the sheep walks of Buenos Ayres and Montevideo, to look for a field for their enterprise nearer home among the park-like scenery of the Jamaica highlands, they would find no less wealthy and certainly safer homes under the flag of their country, among their own people and under the protection of their own laws. The movement I am happy to say has already commenced, and I believe a sufficient knowledge of the charms and capabilities of this Island would easily give it such development as might beneficially influence the destinies of the country. The inconvenient, and to some extent mischievous, independence of the Jamaica negroes arises in a great measure from the unsettled and uncultivated state of the land. But that is an evil which cures itself. In proportion as the black population increases, invades and occupies all the unclaimed ground, it must begin to feel the want of elbow-room and its reliance on mere desultory individual labour must diminish. There will soon be a new generation of negroes for whom work—consistent regular work—will become a necessity and they will gladly hire themselves out to the whites, on the white's own conditions provided those conditions be equitable, and provided the whites themselves take their share in the work and give the example of steady energy and activity. When the white has learnt his duty as a

master he will easily find in his black servant a useful and intelligent auxiliary. It is on these conditions alone that Jamaica may be expected to "look up." The country has been ruined by slavery, by that slavery which was considered the main source of its former welfare. It is necessary that not only slavery, but every trace of its evil influence should disappear from the descendants both of the former slaves and of their masters. Cuba will have to contend with the same difficulties; and with additional evils and dangers from which the British colony has been and is happily exempt. In Cuba the whites as yet outnumber the blacks. In round numbers there are 700,000 of the former to 600,000 of the latter. But one-half of the white population, the Creoles or Cubans, are at more or less open war with the Peninsulars or immigrant Spaniards who constitute the other half. An Insurrection has been raging in the Spanish Island, the ultimate result of which must certainly be to put an end to the thralldom of 300,000 slaves, and possibly to give them for a time the upper hand of their masters. It seems impossible not to look forward to some terrific catastrophe which may plunge Cuba into far greater calamities than any with which Jamaica has ever been afflicted. But let the crisis pass over ever so peacefully or happily the Cubans will have to contend with the difficulty of substituting free for slave labour, and even in this transition the partial

prosperity of the western districts of the Island must run imminent danger. In any fair competition of free labour with slave labour Jamaica and the British West Indies in general will have the start over the Spanish colonies. Cuba has long enjoyed an iniquitous advantage over her neighbours. It is just that the latter should now, on perfectly lawful and equitable grounds, endeavour to retrieve their losses. I have said that Cuba is territorially ten times the size of Jamaica, but the population of the Spanish Antille is little more than double that of the British colony. If deficiency of population has been an evil in Jamaica, how far more grievous must it not be in Cuba where the population, in proportion to the territory, is five times more scanty? If the emancipated slave could be at no loss for squatting ground in the forsaken estates of Jamaica, how much larger an area for the occupation of unclaimed land will he not find in desolate Cuba? Cuba with her large tracts of level or slightly undulating surface is a country admirably suited to the production of sugar; but the very flatness of its territory, the rapid disappearance of the forests both from plain and mountain and the consequent dryness and heat of the climate, render it less favourable to the cultivation of any other produce, and unfit it especially for the establishment of those small grazing farms which in Jamaica would supply profitable and happy employment for many thousands of

white men. The only real advantage Cuba has over the British Island lies in the strong attachment that Spain and her people still entertain for the only considerable colony left them of their once world-wide Transatlantic empire. Had the English no other settlement than Jamaica, or did the attractions of Australia, the Cape, or Canada not blind them to the superior advantages of their verdant tropical possession, there would be little reason for apprehension as to her future prosperity. On the other hand the affection which the Spaniards evince towards their Antille has its sources in sordid considerations which will not stand the test of the inevitably forthcoming disasters. Cuba has been hitherto and from time immemorial a milch cow to Spain. Its real welfare has been made subservient to the views of a narrow protective policy intent upon furthering the selfish interests of the manufacturers, traders and sailors of the Mother Country. Its revenues have been a prey to swarms of Peninsular officials, a set of needy and unprincipled adventurers—harpies who have contaminated and corrupted whatever their rapacity could lay hold of. A political and social revolution which will change all that is inevitable; and when Cuba ceases to be what she now is to the Spaniards their enthusiasm for the “Pearl of the Antilles” will soon cool. With the establishment either of independence or even home government in the Island and the emancipation of

the slaves, at least 100,000 of those Peninsulars who have hitherto only thriven on the oppression of the blacks as well as of the native whites would leave the colony. The development of independent life would at least for some time have the effect of lessening the number and preponderance of the whites, and of increasing the importance of the blacks; and then there would arise in Cuba that difficulty in establishing a *modus vivendi* between the white and coloured races, that difficulty in reorganizing free negro labour under provident white management, from which Jamaica is at present suffering.

But it is not only in the West Indies that the definition of the future relations between the native and the immigrant races constitutes so arduous a puzzle. No one can foresee what limits may be put to this general swarming of the human hives; no one can determine the probable result of their various development, of their eventual contact and collision, or of their ultimate amalgamation. There is only one spot in the West Indies, Hayti, where the Negro has established his empire by violence; but I see symptoms everywhere of his desire to make himself at home by peaceful means throughout the tropics. It is for the white to consider whether it suits him to let this West Indian Paradise, Jamaica, be monopolized by his black brother. It is for the Briton to decide whether he will make over to him exclusively this precious gem of

the tropical seas. The problem is sufficiently abstruse, and it must await its solution by time. There is something in the condition of these colonies, something in that of the Central and South American Republics and even in large districts of the Great American Union, which gives them the appearance not of States but of mere embryos of States—not of stars but of mere nebulae, revolving in ill-defined orbits in space, confused masses of heterogeneous and conflicting atoms awaiting the impulse which is to give them cohesion and consistency. Whether their development and formation should rather be left to their own free action or whether they would better be aided and guided by the influence of the old countries, is a question which I shall not venture to examine. But as to Jamaica it is certain that she will for many years cling lovingly and somewhat helplessly to Great Britain. The negro himself in this Island is a pattern of loyalty; and his aspirations to independence are as yet simply of a personal, not of a national, of a social, not of a political character. General Lersundi, when he threw up the Government of Cuba, declared that “the Island could only cease to be wholly Spanish by becoming wholly African.” And little short of a miracle of good will and good management will be required to enable the English to find room by the side of the negroes in Jamaica.

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